

**Selected  
works of  
Jawaharlal  
Nehru**



AT THE ASIAN RELATIONS CONFERENCE, MARCH 1947

# **Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru**

**Second Series**

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## FOREWORD

Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed our age

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West; the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America. Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an attempt to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But his personality was veiled by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men. Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problems of the poor and the oppressed in all lands. In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to brood on these things when action was urgent and compelling—these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanism.

No particular ideological doctrine could claim Jawaharlal Nehru for its own. Long days in jail were spent in reading widely. He drew much from the thought of the East and West and from the philosophies of the past and the present. Never religious in the formal sense, yet he had a deep love for the culture and tradition of his own land. Never a rigid Marxist, yet he was deeply influenced by that theory and was particularly impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union on his first visit in 1927. However, he realised that the world was too complex, and man had too many facets, to be encompassed by any single or total explanation. He himself was a socialist with an abhorrence of regimentation and a democrat who was anxious to reconcile his faith in civil liberty with the necessity of mitigating economic and social wretchedness. His struggles, both within himself and with the outside world, to adjust such seeming contradictions are what make his life and work significant and fascinating.

ctions in other places I am in a somewhat better position to know than he is. I only hope that, though the situation is full of urgency, nothing may be done in a hurry which might have evil results.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 13. Minutes of the Sixth Miscellaneous Meeting of the Viceroy<sup>1</sup>

During the discussion<sup>2</sup> which followed, Pandit Nehru made the following points:—

- (a) He generally agreed with the procedure envisaged;<sup>3</sup>
- (b) he pointed out that the questions to be asked of the voters in the Punjab and Bengal (i.e. first whether they wished the provinces to be partitioned; and, secondly, whether they wished the whole or parts of the provinces to remain independent, to adhere to Hindustan, or to adhere to Pakistan) were most closely interconnected and would require to be most carefully phrased;
- (c) the 1941 census figures were not very accurate in parts of India, especially parts of Bengal, where there were almost equal numbers of Muslims and non-Muslims.<sup>4</sup> An investigation by the Statistical Survey subsequent to the census had divulged enormous divergencies. Separate electorates gave a great temptation to "cook" numbers, particularly of women in purdah;

<sup>1</sup> Held at New Delhi on 22 April 1947 Extracts *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 10, pp 363-365.

<sup>2</sup> The discussion was initiated by Mountbatten, who said he intended to make one more attempt to persuade both the parties to accept the Cabinet Mission's plan. He also said that the alternative to the acceptance of that plan (or another similar plan for an united India) would be the partition of India. But a decision to divide the country could not be taken by the British. It would be better for the provinces to make their own choice

<sup>3</sup> Details of the procedure envisaged for ascertaining the desires of the provinces were provided by Abell at the meeting

<sup>4</sup> The population figures according to the census of 1941 in Bengal were: Muslims, 33,005,434 and non-Muslims, 27,301,091.

colleagues had to consider diverse issues of the present and the future: the control of communal feelings, the efficiency of the Congress organization, the future objectives of a free India, the role of the army, the framing of independent defence and foreign policies. The Asian Relations Conference, which met in Delhi in March 1947, was a landmark in the history not only of India but of Asia.

The Nehru Memorial Library has been good enough to provide access to the papers of Jawaharlal Nehru and all other relevant collections in its custody. Shrimati Indira Gandhi has made available to us a large number of documents in her possession, and these papers have been referred to in the footnotes as the J N. Collection. The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office in London has permitted reprinting of some documents published in Volumes IX, X and XI of *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*. The India Office Library in London and the John Rylands University Library of Manchester have allowed the printing of some material in their custody. The Secretariats of the President, Prime Minister and the Cabinet, the Ministry of Law and the National Archives of India have authorized the reproduction of some notes and letters in their possession. A few items in *Sardar Patel's Correspondence* and *Sardar's Letters—Mostly Unknown, Post Centenary Vol I* have also been included.

Before his death, Shri Pyarelal kindly gave us permission to consult his personal collection. *The Hindustan Times*, *The Hindu*, *National Herald*, *The Statesman*, *News Chronicle*, *Tribune* and *The Times of India* have allowed us to reprint the texts of speeches and statements published by them.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

A.I.C.C.	All India Congress Committee
A.I.S.P.C.	All India States People's Conference
A.G.G.	Agent to the Governor General
A.P.	Associated Press
A.P.I.	Associated Press of India
A.R.P.	Air Raid Precaution
B.O.A.C.	British Overseas Airways Corporation
C.O.D.	Central Ordnance Depot
C.P.	Central Provinces
C.R.	Commonwealth Relations
D.I.K.	Dera Ismail Khan
E.A.D.	External Affairs Department
G.S.	Governor's Secretary
H.M.G.	His Majesty's Government
I.C.S.	Indian Civil Service
I.M.A.	Indian Military Academy
I.N.A.	Indian National Army
I.O.L.R.	India Office Library and Records
I.P.C.	Indian Penal Code
I. & S. Departments	Industries and Supplies Departments
M.L.A	Member of Legislative Assembly
M. & S.M. Railway	Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway
N.A.T.O.	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
N.M.M.L.	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
N.W.F.P	North West Frontier Province
P.M.S.	Prime Minister's Secretariat
P.S.V.	Private Secretary to Viceroy
T.V.A.	Tennessee Valley Authority
U.P.	United Provinces
W.C.	Working Committee

# THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT

**1. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
10 February 1947

Dear Lord Wavell,

Thank you for your letter of 5 February about Appointments Committees of the Cabinet.<sup>2</sup> I appreciate what you have written about the initiative in regard to internal appointments.

I agree that these committees should be appointed as early as possible. But in view of what my colleagues and I wrote to you a few days ago in regard to the composition of the Interim Government,<sup>3</sup> I think it will be better to await a decision on that matter before discussing the personnel of the Appointments Committees.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *Sardar Patel's Correspondence 1945-50*, Vol. 4, p 480.

2 In his letter of 5 February 1947, Wavell wrote that his use of the word 'advice' in his letter of 19 January 1947 was perhaps misleading as the appointments were to be made by the Governor-General in Council. He also felt that the same yardstick could not be applied in the matter of internal appointments as in external appointments, as certain departmental procedures had to be followed. He felt that the committees ought to be set up immediately.

3. See *post*, section 2, item 2

**2. To Abul Kalam Azad<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
14 February 1947

My dear Maulana,

Thank you for sending me the note you have prepared for your press conference on the 18th.<sup>2</sup> I have read it carefully. There are some matters in it which are likely to raise controversy. For instance, with reference to imparting religious instruction in schools you yourself say that there

1 J. N Collection

2. Azad wrote to Nehru on 13 February 1947, "I do not think there is anything in the statement I have prepared which requires consideration by the Cabinet. I am, however, sending it to you all the same for your perusal"

is a great deal of difference of opinion among experts on this point.<sup>3</sup> Without going into the merits of any such proposal, it is clear that opinions differ widely and if this is so, it would be unwise to say something on behalf of the Government without reference to the Cabinet and without some kind of a decision on the subject. It would raise a controversy in the public also, and when we have so many controversies it hardly seems desirable to add to them.

2. Of course you are entitled to give your personal opinion, although the personal opinion of a Minister in regard to his department cannot wholly be personal.

3. Another matter, which is highly controversial in India at present, is the encouragement of the Roman script.<sup>4</sup> Personally I am not at all opposed to it, though I am not clear in my mind as to how far we can go. Gandhiji, as you know, is very much against it, and he has only recently written about it.<sup>5</sup> I am quite sure that the great majority of our people are opposed to it at present and are likely to remain so at least so long as any vestige of British rule remains here. In this state of affairs no proposal to use the Roman script officially or semi-officially is likely to be approved of. It will only result in controversy.

4. The proposal to set up a National Museum should fit in with an actual proposal on that subject which has been made by a committee specially appointed.<sup>6</sup> It is true that the Museum is supposed to deal chiefly with art, archaeology etc.

5. The reference to the British Museum is perhaps not very appropriate because this Museum contains the collection not of British works of art

3. As religious instruction imparted in private institutions in India, in many cases, instead of broadening the outlook and promoting a spirit of toleration and goodwill, had produced the opposite results, Azad felt that religious instruction could be imparted more effectively if the State took charge of that question

4. Azad favoured the use of Roman script as supplementary to Devanagari and Urdu, but added that this question should be considered by educationists all over India

5. In a press statement on 24 January 1947 Mahatma Gandhi said that the Roman script should not be allowed to replace "the two Indian scripts", "let it not be said of India that it is so degraded as to become the blotting sheet of civilisation."

6. The Central Advisory Board of Education proposed the setting up of a National Cultural Trust as the first step to setting up a National Museum

etc., but rather foreign specimens. The chief British thing it has is a huge library.

6. You refer to the Jamia Millia and Shantiniketan. As you know, substantial grants have been made to both recently.<sup>7</sup>

7. If I may say so, parts of your statement for the press are very good, but they are more in the form of an essay than of a press statement. The fairly long account of missionary effort is very interesting, but I doubt if it will be particularly relevant in the present context.

8. I am returning your note

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. Azad thought that the Government of India should help such educational experiments at the initial stages without waiting for results as the lack of funds might hinder their progress

### 3. To Abul Kalam Azad<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
14 February 1947

My dear Maulana,

I have received your note on Parliamentary Secretaries which I have read. I have also been thinking about the Council of State nominations. Apart from certain present difficulties in carrying out these proposals, there is a major difficulty. We are now in the midst of a very severe crisis which is likely to affect the whole constitution of the Government. No one knows what may happen within the next week or ten days. It is almost certain, however, that things will not remain where they are, and some decision this way or that way will have to be taken. It is at least a possibility that we may not remain in Government. In such a state of affairs it seems to me undesirable to make any fresh proposals which are in the nature of innovations or which may lead to controversy. I think we should allow matters to rest where they are till we know definitely what is going to happen. Because of this, I have for several weeks

1. J.N Collection.

refrained from making several proposals in my department which I might otherwise have done.

2. There are some other considerations also which make me doubt the advisability of considering these matters. Any nomination to the Council of State should not be made without reference to the Leader of the Council, namely Nishtar. It is obvious that Nishtar will object to many of our nominations. We can hardly take this matter to the Cabinet and decide by a majority.

3. If any one Parliamentary Secretary is appointed, it will inevitably follow that the Muslim League Members will demand such secretaries for themselves. That will increase the Government in its wider sense and produce more confusion by bringing in non-cooperative elements in it. Parliamentary Secretaries will have access to confidential files. Nothing will remain private.

4. We shall be on very weak ground if we make a major issue of appointments and nominations in such a way. If our proposal is accepted, the League will have full right to do the same. There will also be considerable heart-burning among our own people in the Assembly.

5. Charges of nepotism might be brought against us. These, no doubt, will be untrue, but they will still be believed. We have been very careful in this matter since we took charge of Government. Indeed I have appointed nobody to my departments although a change is needed.

6. Yesterday I heard, to my surprise and dismay, that Rajendra Babu had appointed Jugal Kishore Khanna<sup>2</sup> as a Deputy Secretary in his department. Such an appointment of a leading Congressman in Delhi to a Deputy Secretary's position seems to me full of danger. It will give a big handle to our opponents and it will do no particular good to us. Apart from its effect upon us and the Government, it will, I think, adversely affect the Congress where there will be personal rivalries as to who should be appointed. The Congress organization, which is in a bad way today, will become worse. I am writing these brief points for your consideration.

7. I am returning your note.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. (b 1900), lawyer of Delhi

**4. To Rajendra Prasad<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi

15 February 1947

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have your letter of the 15th.<sup>2</sup> If the members of the Assembly want a debate on food, we shall certainly try to find a day. The subject is a most important one, though I do not know whether a debate will throw much light on the situation. What I am more anxious about is that the whole question of food, cloth and other essential supplies should be considered by us fully. The situation is getting more and more desperate and we should really consider whether some departure from our old policy is not indicated. I can myself suggest nothing, but I have an uncomfortable feeling that we are functioning in the ruts while the situation deteriorates.

Apart from the positive measures to be taken regarding production and distribution of supplies, the question of black-marketing must also be reviewed. I suppose this is largely a provincial matter. But we may give a lead.

About the food debate, an assurance might be given that we shall try our best to find a day. No date need be fixed just yet.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.

2 Rajendra Prasad reported that the members of the standing advisory committee of the central legislature on food and agriculture were demanding a debate in the Assembly on the food situation.

**5. To Liaquat Ali Khan<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi

1 March 1947

My dear Nawabzada,

Some parts of your budget speech raise questions of basic policy, quite

1. J.N. Collection.

apart from the proposals for taxation, etc.<sup>2</sup> I shall mention two such matters. You referred to the desirability of regional planning in preference to central or national planning.<sup>3</sup> This, as you know, is a question over which there is a great deal of difference of opinion. Indeed the matter is likely to come up soon before the Cabinet in connection with the Advisory Planning Board's report.<sup>4</sup> That report itself is based on some measure of central planning and a Planning Commission is envisaged in it. Thus far the policy of Government has also proceeded on the basis of some kind of central direction and control. I feel that your reference to this subject might well lead people to think that you were representing the views of Government in this matter, while as a matter of fact you were giving expression to your own views. It would be unfortunate if there was a public controversy between Members of Government on an issue of this kind. Personally, as you no doubt know, I am greatly interested in and even connected for many years past with the idea of central planning. I feel embarrassed, therefore, at your reference to this subject.

2. Another matter which I might mention here is your statement that you have decided to nationalise the Reserve Bank.<sup>5</sup> For my part I agree that the Reserve Bank will have to be nationalised, though the time and manner of doing so will have to be carefully considered. I should not think that that was an issue for the present moment. While I agree with

2. The budget for 1947-48, introduced in the Central Assembly on 28 February 1947 by Liaquat Ali Khan, revealed a deficit of Rs 48 46 crores. For meeting the deficit he proposed a 25% tax on business profits exceeding Rs one lakh, doubling of the rate of corporation tax, doubling of the export duty on tea and a graduated tax on capital gains. The salt tax was abolished and the import of foodstuffs subsidised.
3. Liaquat Ali had said that India, with its population of four hundred million which was one-fifth of the human race, and its area of nearly 16 hundred thousand square miles, was far too big to be treated as one unit for the purpose of planning.
4. The Advisory Planning Board in its report submitted to the Government on 18 December 1946 suggested the appointment of a Planning Commission and also a Priorities Board for allocation of resources in short supply. The Board favoured limitation of the role of foreign private capital to highly specialised industries, but on nationalisation there were differences of opinion. But it recommended for consideration the nationalization of coal, mineral oils, iron and steel, air and river transport.
5. Liaquat Ali Khan had said that, after due consideration, he had come to the conclusion that advantages of nationalisation of the Reserve Bank outweighed any possible disadvantages, and therefore the Reserve Bank should be nationalised.

you generally on this issue, I do feel that an important declaration of this kind affecting our financial and economic policy should only come from the Government after full consideration of it by the Cabinet.

3. There are some other matters also. But for the present I shall only refer to the above two statements made by you. Whether they have any immediate significance or not I do not know. But in any event they are important declarations of policy which we, as Members of Government, would normally have to support. Do you not think that in all such matters a previous reference to the Cabinet is essential? I would suggest that even now these subjects should be put up before the Cabinet for their consideration and decision. I would rather that you put them up than that I should take the initiative in the matter.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 6. To Liaquat Ali Khan<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
5 March 1947

My dear Nawabzada,

Thank you for your letter of the 4th March<sup>2</sup>

2. I appreciate that what you said about regional planning was an expression of your own views. Obviously you are entitled to express your views on this or any other subject. But I imagine that the budget speech is normally meant to give expression to Government policy, and the Finance Member speaks on behalf of the Government. It is very different from any speech that might be delivered elsewhere or on a different occasion. Indeed it is perhaps one of the most important pronouncements made on behalf of the Government throughout the year.

3. Nobody can be opposed to regional planning as such. Indeed this is inevitable in any scheme of planning. But isolation of one region from

1. J N Collection

2. Liaquat Ali wrote that in his budget speech he had made it clear that he was expressing his personal views in the matter.

another is quite another thing, and central planning brings various regions into inter-relation. Apart from this, much depends on what a region is. Planning normally thinks in terms of economic units and regions and not of merely certain geographical areas.<sup>3</sup> Planning in fact should aim at helping specially any backward areas so as to produce a sound and balanced economy. This planning must depend upon the willing cooperation of the various units. There can be very little imposition from any central authority. The point of central planning is not to force any region or unit to do something but rather to help it and to coordinate its activities with other units.

4. As regards the nationalisation of the Reserve Bank, the question is not one of the merits of the proposal. Personally I am convinced that it has to come some time or other. But because there are no private profits in this bank beyond a certain specified figure, and because its policy is largely controlled by the Government, it can be considered a semi-State bank already. There is no immediate hurry to bring about this change and we can choose a suitable time for it. I take it that nationalisation would mean the expenditure of a large sum of money in buying up the shares.

5. But as I have said above, it is not the merits that I wrote to you about, but rather that a decision should be taken without reference to the Cabinet. You referred to this "decision". Who took it and when?

6. You are perfectly right in saying that I have made public statements occasionally on matters of policy. I do not think, however, that I have said anything in the Assembly or otherwise which went beyond the more or less recognised policy of the Government. I may occasionally, in answer to a question by the members, have perhaps expressed an opinion. Regarding your reference to Maulana Azad's statement,<sup>4</sup> I find from him that he did not say this in any statement as such. In answer to a question, however, at a press conference, which was in reference to

3. Liaquat Ali had said that the Muslims were completely opposed to central control which any form of central planning would necessarily involve; their experience of this policy had convinced them that only regional planning could develop a sound and balanced economy of the various zones.

4. Regarding Maulana Azad's statement on communal universities Liaquat Ali wrote that so far as Aligarh was concerned, the matter vitally affected the educational and cultural future of the Muslims of India and any pronouncements made on such an important subject should have had the concurrence of the Muslim League's representatives in the Government.

a new communal university in Bengal, he did say that personally he was opposed to communal universities, but that the Government would continue to assist them so long as public opinion did not change.<sup>6</sup>

7. As regards the question of the All India Radio language policy,<sup>6</sup> I understand that a very lengthy correspondence took place between you, Sardar Patel and the Viceroy.<sup>7</sup> I understand also that no major change was made.

8. I am told that the usual practice in regard to budget statements is that all questions of policy are decided previously by the Cabinet. I think this is the policy in England and elsewhere; and even in India this was followed till recently.

9. As this question raises rather important issues for the future, I am sending copies of this correspondence to the Viceroy. I enclose a copy of my letter to him.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. Referring to communal universities, Maulana Azad declared, at a press conference held on 18 February 1947, that the Government was opposed to the establishment of such universities as they had harmed the country greatly. The Government, however, would have to continue subsidizing the existing ones till strong public opinion prevailed against them and they were replaced by national universities
6. Referring to Patel's communique on the All India Radio's language policy, Liaquat Ali complained that his repeated requests for bringing the matter before the Cabinet for full discussion had been ignored. He regarded the statement as an attempt to undermine the Urdu language and Muslim culture in the country.
7. Wavell suggested that Provincial Governments should be consulted on the question of languages to be used by the All India Radio. Patel thought that this would complicate, instead of easing, the problem, and there was every likelihood that Provincial Governments would "import extraneous considerations into the consideration of this question." There was also the danger that in the confusion of political and other angles from which each Provincial Government would view the subject, the all-India aspect would be completely lost.

7. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
5 March 1947

Dear Lord Wavell,

I am enclosing copies of correspondence with Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan. Important issues arise in regard to a budget statement laying down Government policy. I understand that the definite policy in England or elsewhere has been for the Cabinet to discuss all such questions of policy, apart from specific proposals. In India also, I am told that till recently the part of the budget speech which dealt with policy generally was placed before the Members of the Cabinet.

2. I am sending these papers to you to keep you informed of this matter. I do not wish to trouble you about it a few days before your departure. The matter can be considered later. But it has to be cleared up some time or other.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

t J N Collection

8. Economy and Efficiency in Government Departments<sup>1</sup>

In view of the various schemes of nation-building activities initiated by the Government, the question of retrenchment has got to be examined against the background of the new and rapidly growing departments. Take for instance the External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations Departments. The retrenchment issue has to be considered with special

1 Remarks at a meeting of the Central Legislature Congress Party, New Delhi, 6 March 1947 From *The Hindustan Times* and *The Hindu*, 7 March 1947

reference to the question of providing staff for carrying out the post-war development schemes.<sup>2</sup>

While it is generally accepted that much more work will have to be done by every single Government employee, the really important point to be considered is one of efficiency. This point will assume importance in view of the fact that in the course of the next two or three months the Secretary of State's services will no longer exist. I suggest that although reorganisation of all the services from top to bottom will be necessary, economy, consistent with efficiency, should be kept in view by all the Government departments.

- 2 It was decided to dispose of surplus stores required during the war, and to retain only 15 out of 36 factories to meet post-war demands. A general policy of retrenchment in the ordnance and other factories was thus envisaged to reduce expenditure on wartime production to cover the expenditure incurred on approved development schemes

## 9. To Aruna Asaf Ali<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
9 March 1947

My dear Aruna,

The question of retrenchment in ordnance depots and factories has long been before us. There have been some strikes in this connection too which have developed into communal conflicts. For some time past this matter has come up again and again and various proposals have been made on behalf of the All-India Ordnance Employees Federation. I am unable to go into the merits of these proposals but I do wish to avoid a strike<sup>2</sup> if that is possible. That would be bad at any time, more especially now. As you know there are some elements among the employees who are bent on creating trouble; others wish to avoid this, if possible,

1. J N. Collection.
2. The decision to launch a struggle throughout the country, if the question of retrenchment were not decided in favour of ordnance factory workers, was taken in Kanpur on 24 February 1947 at a meeting of the Working Committee of the All-India Ordnance Employees Federation. It was decided that all ordnance workers would observe 11 March as the Anti-Retrenchment Day.

provided they are given some hope. A suggestion has been made on their behalf that the whole matter might be considered afresh by a small committee of enquiry. This might be a desirable course to follow. I have a feeling that we have been following too much in the ruts and have not fully considered all the aspects of the problem. A committee might help us to do this. I would, therefore, like you to consider this matter and, if necessary, we might put it up before the Cabinet. In any event, we shall have to consider it if there is an all-India strike. It is better to do so before trouble actually begins. I have requested the Employees Federation to hold their hand. Meanwhile perhaps we might consider this matter briefly at our informal meeting tomorrow at 5 P.M. But before we can go into it more deeply some facts and figures will be necessary which the Defence and Industries Departments will have to collect.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 10. To Aruna Asaf Ali<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
10 March 1947

My dear Aruna,

As I promised you, I put up the matter of the C.O.D.<sup>2</sup> retrenchment informally before the Members of the Cabinet. We discussed it in its various aspects. The Members concerned were quite prepared to appoint a small committee to consider the utilization of present C.O.D. factories for civilian use, so as to avoid retrenchment as far as possible. Indeed this has been their policy. They could have it examined afresh to find out how it could be improved upon. Also they have made arrangements in the labour office to keep records of all people retrenched so that they can be available for re-employment at the earliest opportunity.

2. But the question of holding up retrenchment or withdrawing notices already issued seemed to them a very difficult matter. They could not do it without formal reference to the Cabinet. Apart from this formality, it was a step which would have far-reaching consequences. Undoubtedly it would affect the retrenchment in all other Government departments.

1. J.N. Collection.

2. Central Ordnance Depot.

It would also affect indirectly people who had already been retrenched. It would mean the expenditure of a very large sum of money which has not been provided for, for our budget estimates are based on a certain pace in retrenchment.

3. It is admitted that retrenchment is inevitable in present circumstances. Indeed there is a very strong demand for all-round retrenchment in the Secretariat which has grown tremendously during the war years. The shock of a large deficit in our budget has increased the demand for rapid retrenchment and economy in public expenditure. It is a valid demand though inevitably it is likely to lead to some distress in the case of those retrenched.

4. We have thus to consider this question in all its aspects and its implications, and any step that we might take in regard to C.O.D. would inevitably react in scores of other departments. This means additional expenditure to the tune of many crores of rupees. Indeed the proposal to give several months' bonus would also have to be applied to other departments. This again means crores of rupees. We find it difficult to take any step which would cast this burden on the general tax-payer at a time when the existing burden is heavy enough. We stand on the verge of an economic crisis and every step has to be carefully considered

5. In view of all these and other factors, my colleagues felt that it was not possible for them to stop the retrenchment or to withdraw notices that had been issued. They could appoint a committee but on the express understanding that there was no postponement meanwhile of the process that was going on. This would hardly satisfy your Union. In any event the matter will be carefully examined now and from time to time, and it is hoped that it might be possible to re-absorb later many of those who are retrenched now. But that ultimately will depend on the economic position of the country and the growth of industry. If the economic position deteriorates and industry does not expand, as we want it to do, then I fear it will be difficult to increase employment on any substantial scale.

6. It is not possible to isolate the C.O.D. problem from the many other connected problems. We realise fully that in these hard times it is not pleasant to be retrenched. At the same time we cannot ignore the burden on the general tax-payer and the tremendous demand for all-round retrenchment in order to lighten that burden. The matter is too difficult to be casually decided at any time. To reverse a decision carefully taken

is, of course, even more difficult and would in any event require time and full reconsideration by the Cabinet. In view of the considerations I have mentioned above, it will serve little purpose to send this matter to the Cabinet, and in any event the process will go on meanwhile.

7. I am sorry to disappoint you in this matter. We have tried to do our best. I am writing to you immediately so that you may know how things stand

8. The C.O.D factories are going to be transferred to the Defence Department fairly soon.

9. I enclose some press cuttings from the U.S.A. which might interest you.

Yours affectionately  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 11. The Employment Selection Bureau<sup>1</sup>

In this matter the Home Department have suggested that there is no further necessity for maintaining this Bureau. I understand that the Education Department intend setting up a Bureau of Psychology for their own requirements. E.A.D are strongly of opinion that some Employment Selection Bureau of the kind we have thus far had is necessary for their own requirements, more especially because we have to choose a number of persons for our Foreign Service.

It is difficult for me to judge of the utility of this Employment Selection Bureau in the past. Sir Akbar Hydari, who has had some experience of this Bureau in action, is strongly of opinion that it serves a useful purpose.

It appears that most of the senior officers of the Bureau, who are non-Indians, were engaged on contract of three years and this period expires next year. They have, however, offered to terminate their services earlier, if so desired.

I do not think there is any question of such an Employment Bureau replacing the normal competitive tests. These latter are inevitably to be

<sup>1</sup> Note, 12 March 1947 External Affairs Department File No 22(15)-FSP/47  
pp. 2-4/n, National Archives of India.

kept on for certain services The only question that arises is whether there should be these additional tests apart from the competitive ones. If so, it should mean either that there is a certain weeding out process to begin with or that this test is one of the many other tests by examination In regard to some services where no competitive tests are provided, these psychological tests might well be very useful. They would really take the place of the personal interview or the *viva voce* examination. The normal interview is rather unsatisfactory and the candidate is in a nervous state during the interview and seldom does justice to himself. Probably the kind of interviews that take place according to these psychological methods are much better.

In most countries these psychological tests are being applied in regard to public appointments. They are still in a formative stage and it is not possible to be precise In regard to the top grades they are certainly helpful; lower down in the scale they are not so helpful It is recognised, however, that this method is an important one which deserves to be employed even now. It is likely to gain in importance in future. If that is so, it would be desirable to keep a nucleus which can expand when necessary and which will serve the purpose of training Indians Otherwise, when we want to have such a process of selection we shall have no trained persons with us and we may have to rely on outsiders

I cannot say how far Indians have been trained for this purpose. There should be no difficulty about this. If some have been partly trained it would be desirable to complete the process which is essentially practical.

If some kind of a nucleus has to be kept both for selection purpose and training it is obviously desirable that Home Department should be in control of it rather than that separate departments should have their own selection personnel The latter course would mean duplication, greater expense and to some extent wastage. Probably, there would not be much chance of training people if the Selection Bureau is split up.

I imagine it should be possible to reduce the present cost of this Bureau as well as the staff. I would suggest to Home Department for their consideration, for it is primarily a matter for them to consider, that a strong nucleus of this Bureau might be kept up for the next year and during this period Indian officers should be put in charge of it. This nucleus should of course be big enough to be able to do effectively the kind of work we have in view for them. They can help us in E.A.D. as well as in other departments They should normally confine their activities to Governmental purposes. The present Selection Bureau has been, I understand, working outside also, though with Government's

permission. If it does work only for the Government the staff may be more limited.

The Education Department probably require the services of psychologists for some other purposes in regard to education. If so, they can use the common Selection Bureau and have in addition one or two specialist psychologists of their own choice.

I feel a little hesitant in making any suggestions about this matter, because of my own ignorance of the subject, but I feel that it would be a pity to wind up this Bureau completely as then we might lose the advantage of the training we have already given to some people and it might be difficult to resume this in future without a big gap. Probably in future we are going to require some such Bureau to help in selection. We might, therefore, keep on something going which could subsequently develop. Also, as I have pointed out, there is some need for such a Bureau in E A D. at least during the next six months or so. I would request H M. Home to be good enough to consider this matter from this point of view and if he agrees with the general approach he might take steps accordingly<sup>2</sup> In any event, I think it is far better to have a single organisation for this purpose functioning under the Home Department than that various departments should set up their own organisations. The latter course would neither lead to efficiency nor to economy

2. Vallabhbhai Patel, in his note of 18 March 1947, said that written test plus *viva voce* served equally well the purpose of psychological tests and considered the expenditure on a separate bureau to be unjustified

## 12. To Liaquat Ali Khan<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
13 March 1947

My dear Nawabzada,

I have just received your letter of the 13th March late in the evening.<sup>2</sup>

1. J.N. Collection.

2. In his letter of 13 March 1947, Liaquat Ali had complained that Satyanarain Sinha, the Chief Government Whip, had been canvassing support among the members of the Select Committee on the taxation Bills for the counter-proposals included in the Bills, and claimed to be doing so at the instance of Patel and Nehru. Liaquat Ali requested Nehru, as Leader of the House, "to undo the mischief being done by Mr. Sinha."

I do not know what exactly has taken place in the Select Committee on the taxation Bills. But in the course of the last two or three days some information has been given to me of the progress of work there by some members of the committee. On receipt of your letter I telephoned to Mr. Sinha.<sup>3</sup> He told me that he had not canvassed anybody in Sardar Patel's name or my name. He had, however, supported certain counter-proposals and amendments in the Select Committee.

2. I understand that certain proposals have been put forward in the Select Committee during the last two or three days.<sup>4</sup> One of these was that instead of Business Profits Tax Excess Profits Tax should be substituted as this had the advantage of being known and understood and would bring in a larger revenue. Certain other proposals were also put forward by various members of the Select Committee. We have all been naturally very much interested in the work of the Select Committee because of the vital nature of the budget proposals. We have looked upon this matter both from the point of view of raising sufficient revenue as well as doing it in a manner to upset industry and lessen production as little as possible. We were told at one stage that Khwaja Nazimuddin had suggested the substitution of E.P.T. This seemed to us a desirable suggestion and we told some of the members of the Select Committee who consulted us that it should be supported; so also in regard to certain other suggestions made. For some reason or other Khwaja Nazimuddin apparently changed his mind as had others who had supported this proposal previously.

3. As you know, the budget proposals were placed before the House without any full discussion or consideration by the Cabinet. Dr. Matthai and I had expressed our general concurrence to you in regard to the basis of certain proposals which you had briefly placed before us. We could not consider them then or later as we did not have any data. During the Cabinet meeting we were only informed of these proposals.

3 (1900-1983), a Congressman of Bihar; Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, 1948-52; Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, 1952-67, of Information and Broadcasting, 1963-64, of Communications, 1964-67, of Health, 1967-69 and of Information, Broadcasting and Communications, 1969-71, Governor of Madhya Pradesh, 1971-77.

4. The Business Profits Tax Bill, the Income-Tax and the Excess Profits Tax (Amendment) Bill and the Taxation on Income (Investigation Commission) Bill were referred to the Select Committee by Liaquat Ali on 5 March 1947. But, in the light of the minutes of dissent by all the Congress members in the Select Committee, the Bills were referred back to the Cabinet for discussion.

Subsequently we have given earnest thought to them and have felt that certain changes would improve them considerably without sacrifice of revenue. Many of us feel that otherwise they might lead to injury to industry and might come in the way of further industrialisation. Because of this we gave them much more thought than is usually done. Dr. Matthai, whose opinion is valued greatly, was of considerable help to us in this consideration. As a result we suggested to some of our colleagues in the Select Committee to try to get certain changes incorporated which would improve the budget proposals. Presumably this was done by them in the Select Committee. This was not a political matter and we tried to view it, therefore, from a non-political angle. The money had to be found and the burden had to be borne by those who were capable of bearing it. The question was how best this could be done. I think we would have been failing in our duty if we had not tried to improve the budget proposals in this way. The matter would have been very different if the proposals had been made after full consideration and approval of the Cabinet. We had hoped that the Select Committee would succeed in arriving at suitable compromises in regard to matters in dispute. If this was not possible, then all matters in dispute would have to be taken up to the Cabinet for their final decision which, no doubt, would be binding on the Government.

4. The difficulty you point out is one which inevitably follows from the departmental system of working which has been encouraged in the Interim Government. If there was a proper Cabinet method of functioning, as all governments normally practise, the difficulty would not arise. Alternatively every important matter must be considered by the Cabinet for their joint decision. If neither of these methods is followed, then the result is a certain conflict. It is obvious that vital budget proposals made without any general consideration of policy by the Government and without any approval of them by the Government, cannot be considered binding on every Member of the Government so long as there is any real difference of opinion and a meeting of the Cabinet had not resolved it. As I have repeatedly pointed out on other occasions, this is a highly unsatisfactory method of working for any Government and it is patent that it cannot go on.

5. I have naturally avoided saying anything in criticism of the budget proposals although I have felt that there is room for criticism of many of their aspects. I have asked my other colleagues in the Assembly also to avoid public criticism as far as possible. But that does not mean that I must accept these proposals as they are and not try to vary them

where I think they should be varied. Nor does it mean that members of the Select Committee should function as automata in regard to vital matters referred to them.

6. I think you are right in saying that any act of disloyalty on the part of a Government Whip must make the conduct of Government business in the legislature impossible. But the question is what and to whom is the disloyalty, and what is the final Government policy in regard to any matter.

7. I am sending copies of your letter and this letter to Mr. Satyanarain Sinha as well as to Sardar Patel. I am myself going away tomorrow to some cities in the Punjab on a brief visit. I hope to be back on Monday.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 13. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
17 March 1947

Dear Lord Wavell,

I have received today a letter dated 17th March from Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan. He informs me that he has sent you a copy of this. I am sending him a reply today, and I enclose a copy of this for your information. I do not know if Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan has sent you copies of our previous correspondence on this subject. If he has not done so and you desire to see them, I shall send them to you.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

<sup>1</sup> J.N Collection

**14. To Liaquat Ali Khan<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi

17 March 1947

My dear Nawabzada,

I have received your letter of the 17th March today on my return this evening from the Punjab.<sup>2</sup>

2. As I wrote to you in my letter, I sent a copy of that letter to Mr. Sinha because reference had been made to him in your letter and mine and I thought it only fair that he should know what this was. It is true that I had mentioned in my letter that at the Cabinet meeting we were only informed of these proposals. There seems to me no disclosure of any Cabinet secret in my doing this. The only other persons I showed my letter to, were Sardar Patel and Dr. Matthai. I do not know what transpired at the meeting of the Select Committee on the 14th. But I do not see where any particular secrets come into the matter.

4. Your reference to Dr. Matthai and I agreeing to the full content of your proposals does not seem to me to be correct. Nobody, not even Dr. Matthai with his knowledge and insight, could consider these fully on the brief occasions and in the manner in which they were brought up.<sup>3</sup> Indeed when the draft minutes of the Cabinet meeting of February 28th came to me, I sent a note to this effect to the Cabinet Secretariat.

5. The matter is far too important for any technical view to be taken. Therefore it is desirable that it should be considered fully at an early meeting of the Cabinet. I have suggested this course to the Viceroy.

6. I am not entering into the merits of the proposals or of the amendments suggested. These should be considered by all of us from the larger viewpoint of raising revenue, social justice, and encouragement of industry—the principles you have yourself laid down.

7. The part that Mr. Sinha has played in the Select Committee has, as you have yourself pointed out, been largely based on his consultations with me. Obviously if any person is in error, it is not Mr. Sinha. When he was in doubt as to what he should do, he came to me for advice and I spoke to him on the lines indicated above. This has little to do with his activity as a Government Whip.<sup>4</sup> The difficulty, as I pointed out to you in my last letter, arises not from what Mr. Sinha did or did not do, but from a lack of proper Cabinet method of functioning. The Government Whip has to deal with the Government Party in the House. He has to deal with the Leader of the House. Naturally he must keep in touch with particular Members of Government in charge of Government business. If the departmental system of working is followed, then the Whip is placed in a very difficult position. It has become necessary, therefore, for this as well as for many other reasons that there should be full Cabinet functioning.

8. As you have sent a copy of your letter to the Viceroy, I am also sending him a copy of this letter for his information.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Liaquat Ali had written that the proposals were fairly simple and straightforward and if Nehru had not fully understood them, he could have secured elucidation. Liaquat Ali said he could not believe that Matthai was unable to appreciate the exact nature and implications of the proposals.

4. Liaquat Ali had said that the affair had brought out the inadvisability of appointing a party man as a Government Whip, he should be a non-party man, preferably an official, who would take his instructions in the matter of Government business from the particular Member in charge.

**15. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi

17 March 1947

Dear Lord Wavell,

Thank you for your letter of the 14th March which I received this evening on my return from the Punjab.<sup>2</sup>

2. I confess to be greatly surprised that a question of fact should have given rise to such different impressions I am quite clear in my own mind that I never considered the budget proposals in any details, nor indeed was I in a position to consider them at the Cabinet meeting of the 28th February or earlier. Some of my colleagues, whom I have consulted, are of the same opinion. That should be enough to decide the question that has arisen and it would be completely incorrect to say in the minutes that the proposals were approved. If any such statement is made, then the note I sent should be attached to the minutes.

3. I do not think that the practice in India or in the U.K. or in other countries has been uniform as you suggest. That is a matter, however, which can be considered at leisure. What I am concerned with is a correct record of what happened.

4. I entirely agree that the budget is the most important Government measure of the year, and it is, therefore, necessary that the fullest consideration should be given to the principles underlying it. It should certainly be the responsibility of the Cabinet as a whole. In view, however, of the difference of opinion that has arisen regarding the proceedings of the Cabinet meeting of the 28th February, it has become necessary for the matter to be fully considered by the Cabinet at a very early date.

5. Apart from technicalities, such a vital measure, which affects intimately the lives of our people and has aroused a great deal of controversy, should be fully considered. I had hoped that this consideration would be given to it in the Select Committee and points of difference ironed out. It would be unfortunate if there was a vital difference of opinion in the Assembly regarding these proposals. I do not know

1. J N. Collection.
2. Wavell had written: "Both at the preliminary meeting between myself and three members of the Cabinet and at the full Cabinet meeting, though many questions were asked, nothing was said which indicated to me any general disapproval of the taxation policy laid down I therefore consider that it is correct to say that the proposals were approved."

yet what the Select Committee has done or is going to do as I have had no opportunity yet since my return to find this out. But I gathered, before my departure for the Punjab, that there was little hope of a general agreement in the Select Committee. I suggest, therefore, that you will be good enough to put this matter up at an early meeting of the Cabinet.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### **16. To Liaquat Ali Khan<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
19 March 1947

My dear Nawabzada,

I have received your letter of today's date late this evening. I am afraid I do not agree with much that you say in this letter. There appears to be no particular point in repeating what I have already said.

2. As regards the budget proposals, they must obviously be referred to the Cabinet if there is considerable difference of opinion among the Members. I was informed this evening that the Viceroy intended convening an emergent meeting of the Cabinet for this purpose very soon. For my part I would much prefer that we should discuss these matters informally and arrive at mutually satisfactory conclusions. If that does not succeed, then a fresh reference to the Cabinet becomes inevitable.

3. I hope to meet you, as arranged, tomorrow at 12 noon to discuss this matter. I have asked Sardar Patel, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Dr. Matthai and Mr. Rajagopalachari also to come. As Mr. Rajagopalachari is unwell, probably he will not be able to come.

4. I do not share your view about Mr Sinha's conduct being improper in any way. Members of Select Committees, whether they are officials or not, are supposed to act as such members and not merely be automata registering a vote when demanded. In the past, when the official party was a purely Governmental affair and popular parties were in the opposition, the official party had naturally a Government official as the Whip. Now this would be totally ineffectual, for a Government official

1. J.N. Collection.

would not have the knowledge, experience or influence necessary to deal with popular parties.<sup>2</sup>

5. You will appreciate that the kind of correspondence we have recently had on this subject itself indicates that there is something highly unsatisfactory in the working of the Interim Government and Cabinet. We have to remove the root causes It is not much good leaving those causes to function and deal with certain consequential happenings.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Liaquat Ali had refused to accept the position that the Chief Government Whip could act "in his personal capacity" in Select Committees and use his influence to defeat Government measures As, in his view, so long as the Chief Government Whip was a member belonging to a particular political party such an anomaly would persist, he strongly urged that a Government official should be appointed to this position.

## 17. Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting on Budget Proposals<sup>1</sup>

His Excellency said he was proud to be associated with his colleagues in their onerous task of governing India and greatly hoped to be able to be of service to India at this critical time. He understood that difference had arisen over some of the budget proposals. He understood that agreement had been reached in regard to the various taxation proposals but that differences still remained relating to one Bill <sup>2</sup>

The Honourable the Finance Member said he wished to know what the attitude of his colleagues was with regard to that Bill, viz, that relating to an investigation into matters relating to taxation on income. He had two proposals to make, either that the Cabinet may agree to accept the report as it emerged from the Select Committee, or that it

1 25 March 1947 Extracts Lord Mountbatten Papers, Broadlands Archives Trust, Broadlands, Romsey, Hampshire The meeting was attended among others by Mountbatten, Nehru and Liaquat Ali Khan

2 Liaquat Ali Khan had in his budget proposals suggested a twenty-five per cent tax on all business profits of more than one hundred thousand rupees. This was interpreted in Congress circles as an attempt to penalise Hindu capitalists and to bring about dissension between the right wing and the socialist group within the Congress Party.

may decide beforehand what changes should be made in the Bill accordingly. . . .

The Hon'ble Member for External Affairs said that he fully appreciated the Finance Member's difficulty. Attempt must be made to avoid such a situation arising in future. As regards the investigation Bill he thought the principle of investigation was accepted and that was the fundamental thing. It had two aspects: one of a more general nature, how to stop hereafter evasions of income tax and how to improve the income tax machinery as a whole. The other was incidental, viz., taking suitable action where evasions on a large scale were discovered. Obviously it was a matter of extreme delicacy and complexity. The investigation might easily become an inquisition in the hands of the authorities who would have the power of harassing vast numbers of people. Such investigations might also result in corruption. It followed, therefore, that very careful consideration would have to be given to the manner of conducting such enquiries, and to the selection of the people who should conduct them. In order therefore to get over the Finance Member's difficulty, he would suggest that the Cabinet should consider all aspects of the proposal in some detail. Unlike the Finance Bills this was not a matter of extreme urgency and a delay of a few days should not matter. . . .

## 18. To Vallabhbhai Patel<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
7 April 1947

My dear Vallabhbhai,

In *The Hindustan Times* of 4 April considerable prominence has been given to the problem of Indian Defence Forces and the appointment of a Defence Committee<sup>2</sup> to consider this<sup>3</sup>. In effect, the decisions of the Cabinet have been published. In the same issue of *The Hindustan Times* it is also stated that the Central Pay Commission's report has been

1. *Sardar Patel's Correspondence 1945-50*, Vol 4, p 532.
2. The Defence Committee consisted of the Viceroy (Chairman), Baldev Singh (Vice-Chairman), Nehru, Patel, Liaquat Ali, Jagjivan Ram, Matthai, Abdur Rab Nishtar and the Commander-in-Chief.
3. *The Hindustan Times* gave an account of the defence budget which amounted to 100 crores, as well as details regarding the proposed strength of the Army, Navy and Air Force.

examined by the Government and accepted. Both these items of news are essentially secret and it is most distressing and embarrassing that publicity should have been given to them.

Previously the *Dawn* had given publicity to matters which had come up before the Cabinet. It is obvious that if Cabinet matters are to leak out this will make the proper functioning of the Cabinet impossible. I should like you to consider what steps might be taken to prevent this kind of occurrence.

I should be glad if you will kindly come to my room in the Council House at 5 p.m. tomorrow (8 April) to consider this and the items on the agenda of the next Cabinet meeting.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 19. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
8 April 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

I should like to bring to your notice a fact which has been distressing me considerably. *The Hindustan Times*, two days ago, gave a fairly full report of the Cabinet discussions regarding the future Defence Forces in India. It also stated that the Cabinet had approved of the Pay Commission's proposals. A few days ago *The Statesman* also gave a fairly detailed report of the Cabinet discussions. The *Dawn* has from time to time also given such reports.

2. I do not know how and where these leakages occur. But they are obviously very objectionable and highly embarrassing to all concerned. I have discussed this matter with some of my colleagues also and they are worried about it. It seems obvious that someone, who was present at the Cabinet meeting, is deliberately or inadvertently responsible for such disclosures to representatives of the press. What should be done about this is not clear to me. But something should certainly be done.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

<sup>1</sup> J N Collection.

**20. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
14 April 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

I should like to draw your attention to another instance of leakage of Cabinet information. In *The Statesman* dated April 13th, considerable prominence is given to an Indian Delegation going to London for the Sterling Balances. The *Dawn* of April 14th also gives this information. The Finance Member had specially mentioned in the Cabinet that this matter should be kept secret.

*The Statesman* report is from a Special Correspondent. The *Dawn* report is apparently from an A.P.I. correspondent.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J N. Collection.

**21. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
15th April 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

I have just received your letter of the 14th April about the news in *The Hindustan Times*.<sup>2</sup> I quite agree with you. Yesterday I wrote to you about certain Cabinet matters appearing in *The Statesman* and the *Dawn*.

1. J N Collection
2. *The Hindustan Times* of 14 April 1947 reported that Mountbatten had communicated to the British Government that he had forcefully tried to convince Jinnah that the demand for a division of India's armed forces and her financial resources, in order to create Pakistan, was impractical. Jinnah was reported to be willing to agree, if the Congress would reiterate its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's proposals and of the British Government's statement of 6 December. The report indicated that the Congress was agreeable if the League did not flout the claims of the Sikhs in the North and the Hindus in the East.

The news in *The Hindustan Times* does not relate to a Cabinet matter, but as a matter of fact it is even more unfortunate and likely to create difficulties.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**22. To Liaquat Ali Khan<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
21 April 1947

My dear Nawabzada,

I have received your letter of April 18th on my return to Delhi this afternoon.

2. I had not forgotten your suggestion about the proposed Sterling Balances Delegation and I have given some thought to it.<sup>2</sup> I have also consulted some of our colleagues. The more I think of it, however, the more difficult it appears for any of us to go abroad for a lengthy period. You know well that we are passing through a critical phase in our history when each one of us has to try to contribute his utmost to the attempt to find a proper solution to our problems. None of us is indispensable or should consider himself so. Nevertheless, having assumed a certain responsibility, we have to shoulder the burden. I do not myself see how you can remain away from India at this juncture for any considerable time. It is perfectly true, of course, that the question of Sterling Balances is of the most vital importance to India and that you are specially concerned with it in your capacity as Finance Member. But you have other responsibilities also which you cannot easily shed.

1. J N. Collection.

2. Liaquat Ali in his letter of 18 April 1947 had proposed the names of John Matthai and Nehru as two Members of the Cabinet to serve on the proposed Sterling Balances delegation. If Nehru was unable to go, he suggested either Patel or Rajagopalachari.

3. This same argument applies to most of us. So far as I remember, in your message to H.M.G. you stated that we would send a Delegation to England if political or other conditions permit it. I just do not see how these conditions permit any of us to leave India on a long visit to London. I think, therefore, that it would be worthwhile for you to press H.M.G. to send their representatives here even though this might involve some slight delay. I do not like this idea of delay in this matter and yet I see no other feasible way out.
4. Apart from other considerations which are common to all of us, there is one other which applies to some of us. This is the Constituent Assembly which will be meeting frequently from time to time, either in full assembly or in sections and committees and the like, during the next few months. Those of us, who are taking any important part in it, can hardly leave it during this formative and working period. This would apply to several Members of the Cabinet. So far as I can remember, the Cabinet Members so affected are Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Patel, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Mr. Rajagopalachari, Mr. Jagjivan Ram and myself.
5. When I mentioned this matter to some of our colleagues, both Sardar Patel and Mr. Rajagopalachari pointed out these difficulties and said that we should try our utmost to arrange for the meeting in India. Dr. Matthai, who is considered by you and me as an obvious choice and who is not in the Constituent Assembly, said that he was likely to have to face a great deal of trouble in his department and would find it difficult to go.
6. If, however, names have to be suggested, Dr. Matthai's name must be included. The only other name that I can think of in this connection, keeping in view what I have said above, is Mr Bhabha's

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 23. Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting on Quetta Water Supply<sup>1</sup>

The Hon'ble Member for External Affairs said that Quetta's main source of water supply was a spring-fed stream passing through the lands of the Hanna and Urak zamindars. It was established by law that half of this supply belonged to the zamindars and the other half to the Government. The Government's share was now inadequate to meet its increasing needs. Moreover, the source itself was diminishing. In order to tide over the difficulty this year, it was proposed to acquire the zamindars' half share on payment of compensation, leaving them enough water for drinking and domestic purposes, for fruit trees and the potato crop but not for growing other heavily irrigated crops. The zamindars would thus lose only their seasonal crops. The Irrigation Member of the C.W.I.N.C.,<sup>2</sup> who was in Baluchistan recently, had been asked to investigate the proposal and he had expressed himself in agreement with it. He had also suggested the setting up of a Joint Water Board to explore with the utmost urgency other possible sources of supply...<sup>3</sup>

1 6 May 1947, Extracts Lord Mountbatten Papers, Broadlands Archives Trust, Broadlands, Romsey, Hampshire. Besides the Viceroy and Nehru ten other Members of the Cabinet were present in the meeting.

2 Central Waterways, Irrigation and Navigation Commission

3 After discussions Nehru's suggestion to acquire the zamindars' half share of the Hanna and Urak water supply on terms indicated by him was accepted. It was also decided that the food deficit of Baluchistan should be made good by the Government of India, and that a Joint Water Board should be set up to explore alternative sources of water supply.

THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY  
AND THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

## 1. Wavell's Record of Interview with Nehru<sup>1</sup>

I saw Nehru for half an hour this evening. I told him how much I regretted the League decision which seemed to leave no loophole.<sup>2</sup> A final breach between Congress and League would have serious effects on the country. There could be no question of H.M.G. dissolving the Constituent Assembly or reversing their policy but obviously a Constituent Assembly without the League and possibly without the States could not make an acceptable constitution for India as a whole.

2. As to the Central Government I said that Congress were in a position to demand the resignation of the Muslim League Members, but whether we should be able to carry on the administration of the country more effectively with the League in active opposition than with them in the Government was a matter for careful consideration. The crisis had come at an awkward time with the budget session of the Assembly just beginning.<sup>3</sup> I asked Nehru whether he had had time to consider the matter with his colleagues and had any views to put forward.

3 Nehru said that the work of the Constituent Assembly would go on but that obviously they could not force a constitution on a reluctant province. He thought that they would probably draw up a model outline constitution for a province and then send it round to provinces for discussion by the Provincial Assembly. They would discuss with States Negotiating Committee on 8th February and see how far the States were prepared to cooperate with the Constituent Assembly.<sup>4</sup> The meetings

1 Telegram from Wavell to Secretary of State, 1 February 1947. Extracts *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 9, pp 594-595.

2 In a resolution passed at Karachi on 31 January 1947, the Muslim League Working Committee blamed the Congress Party for exceeding "the limitations imposed by the statement of May 16th on the Constituent Assembly's functions and powers." It alleged that the elections to the Constituent Assembly and the summons for its convening were *ab initio* void, invalid and illegal, its continuation, proceedings and decisions were *ultra vires*, invalid and illegal and demanded that it "should be forthwith dissolved."

3 The budget session of the Central Legislative Assembly was to open on 3 February 1947.

4 On 21 December 1946, the Constituent Assembly set up a Committee consisting of Azad, Nehru, Patel, Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Shankarrao Deo and N Gopalaswami Ayyangar, and three others to be elected later, to confer with the Negotiating Committee of the Chamber of Princes on the distribution and method of return to the Constituent Assembly of 93 representatives of the Indian States.

of the various Committees had been postponed till the end of February in the hope of Muslim League and States joining.

4. As to the Cabinet, the matter required careful consideration. It was not merely that the League had refused to join the Constituent Assembly, but that until the Bombay resolution was withdrawn they were committed to a policy of direct action, i.e. of active opposition to the Government of which they at present formed part.<sup>5</sup>

5. Nehru was subdued and seemed to realise the difficulties and dangers of the position and the need for careful consideration I asked him to let me have his considered views as early as possible....

5 The Muslim League Working Committee passed its resolution on Direct Action on 29 July 1946 at Bombay. The resolution rejected the Cabinet Mission proposals and exhorted all Muslims to organise themselves for the coming struggle for the establishment of Pakistan.

## 2. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
5 February 1947

Dear Lord Wavell,

In the interview Jawaharlal Nehru had with you last Saturday you discussed the resolution of the Muslim League Working Committee, passed the day before at Karachi. The situation that has been created by the decision of the Muslim League is a grave one and you suggested that we should acquaint you with our considered view in the matter.

2. We have given careful thought to this. We are clearly of opinion that as a consequence of the Muslim League decision it is no longer possible for Members of the Muslim League to continue in the Interim Government. For them to continue to do so would mean an abandonment of the Cabinet Delegation's Scheme of May 16, 1946.

1. This letter was drafted by Nehru. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 9, pp. 622-623

## THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AND THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

3. You will remember that prior to the inclusion of the nominees of the Muslim League in the Interim Government we had repeatedly laid emphasis on the necessity of their accepting the long-term plan of the Cabinet Mission. You told us that this was a prerequisite to their joining the Government.
4. Immediately after entering the Government our colleagues of the Muslim League made it clear that they would not join the Constituent Assembly and that they did not consider the Interim Government as a Cabinet or even as a Coalition. In spite of these difficulties, however, we have continued to function, though rather precariously, in the hope that the Muslim League would after some time accept the full Scheme and enter the Constituent Assembly.
5. This hope has now finally gone and we have to face an open defiance of the whole Cabinet Mission's Scheme, and indeed the demand is for a scrapping of the Scheme. The resolution of the Muslim League, which has now been reaffirmed, is not merely for non-participation in the Constituent Assembly but for a total rejection of the Scheme and for a programme of direct action.
6. It seems impossible to us that this policy and programme can proceed side by side with membership of the Interim Government. The two are incompatible. If the Cabinet Mission's Scheme is to be worked out, as we think it must be, then those who reject it cannot continue as Members of the Interim Government. There is no other alternative.
7. Any changes in the Interim Government at this stage, and during the Budget Session of the Central Assembly, may lead to administrative and other difficulties. We are convinced, however, that to attempt to avoid or delay these changes would result in far graver and more harmful consequences

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru  
A K. Azad  
Vallabhbhai Patel  
Rajendra Prasad  
C. Rajagopalachari  
Jagjivan Ram  
John Matthai  
Baldev Singh  
C.H. Bhabha

3. To Mahatma Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
10.2.1947

Dear Bapu,

This morning I sent you a letter by post. But as Sudhir is going I am sending this note with him.

I have received your letter of February 6th.

I cannot venture to criticise your decision to stay on in East Bengal. But I have an overwhelming feeling that vital decisions are being made and will be made in Delhi, affecting the whole of our future as well as of course the present, and your presence at such a moment is necessary. We are drifting everywhere and sometimes I doubt if we are drifting in the right direction. We live in a state of perpetual crisis and have no real grip of the situation.

As you know, we have informed the Viceroy that in view of the Muslim League resolution passed at Karachi, the League Members cannot continue in the Government. There is really no answer to our charge and demand and the Viceroy realises it. He is awaiting instructions from London. Whatever these may be, our troubles will no doubt continue. What I am worried most about is the rapidly deteriorating economic and labour situation. Also the state of the Congress organisation. Those of us who are in Government have given and can give no time at all to Congress work. We are losing touch with our people. I have been unable to go even to Allahabad for a day for months.

The question of the Princes and States entering the Constituent Assembly worked out ultimately a little better than we expected. But of course there are still many hurdles ahead.

Love,

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

<sup>1</sup> Pyarelal Papers

4. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
13 February 1947

Dear Lord Wavell,

A week ago, on 5th February my colleagues and I sent you a letter in which we pointed out that the Karachi resolution of the Muslim League had created a grave situation. This resolution asked for a scrapping of the Cabinet Delegation's Scheme of May 16th, 1946. In view of this resolution the present precarious situation had become impossible and it was no longer possible for Members of the Muslim League to continue in the Interim Government. The alternative to this was the abandonment of the Cabinet Delegation's Scheme.

2. You were good enough to acknowledge this letter on the 6th February and to state that you were consulting H.M.G. in this matter. We appreciate that the fullest consideration should be given to this matter and also that H.M.G. are at present preoccupied with grave domestic issues.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless the present situation here cannot continue for long and it is urgently necessary to come to decisions and give effect to them. Important matters are hung up and await for decision a more favourable environment. Your proposal to form Appointments Committees, which we have accepted, cannot be given effect to till this major question is settled; so also in regard to other matters.

3. It is now a full week since we wrote to you and we are entitled to have an answer so that we may decide upon our own future course of action. It is not possible for us to continue for long in present circumstances.

4. The issue is a clear and simple one as we pointed out in our previous letter. We understand from the newspapers that a communication has been received by you from the nominees of the Muslim League in the

1 *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 9, pp. 688-689

2 Britain was confronted with a severe fuel crisis during one of the coldest winters in fifty years

Interim Government.<sup>3</sup> We do not know what this is and what further matter need be discussed at this stage. We have made our position perfectly clear and can add nothing to it. The Muslim League has also made its position clear by its Karachi resolution. On the basis of these facts a decision has to be taken. We would request you to let us know what H.M.G. propose to do in the matter. Delay in taking a decision, or a decision which we think is not proper or in conformity with the facts of the situation, will necessarily lead us to reconsider our position in the Interim Government.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

- 3 On 8 February 1947, Liaquat Ali Khan wrote a letter to Wavell reiterating the terms of the Karachi resolution of the Muslim League Working Committee. He particularly emphasised that if the basis of participation in the Interim Government was the acceptance of the Statement of 16 May neither the Congress, which had not accepted it, nor the Sikhs, who had definitely rejected it, had any greater right to have their representatives or nominees in the Government than the Muslim League. In the circumstances it was presumptuous on the part of the nine Members of the Executive Council to demand that their Muslim League colleagues should resign.

## 5. Record of Wavell's Interview with Nehru<sup>1</sup>

I spoke to Nehru on the brief given in Secretary of State's telegram No. 2143,<sup>2</sup> and emphasised the necessity of getting the Muslim League into

- 1 21 February 1947 The first six paragraphs are based on Wavell's report to the Secretary of State sent on 22 February, the last paragraph is the reply sent by George Abell, Private Secretary to the Viceroy, on 1 March to a query by the Secretary of State *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 9, pp. 785-786 and 828.
- 2 The brief advised Wavell to tell Nehru that it was essential to bring the Muslim League into the Constituent Assembly to preserve the unity of India; that the AICC statement of 6 January 1947 had still some reservations in its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's plan, that certain rules of procedure adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 23 December 1946 were inconsistent with the Mission's plan, that if the Congress agreed to reconcile entirely their position with the Mission's plan, assurances might be conveyed by letters from Nehru to Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan through Wavell; and that the British Government would defer dealing with the Congress demand for resignation of the League Members until they knew the views of the Congress upon this suggestion.

the Constituent Assembly. I mentioned the points in the A.I.C.C. resolution of January 6th which seemed to need some explanation if the Muslim League was to be persuaded to join the Constituent Assembly.

2. We then had a discussion on the points in the A.I.C.C. resolution and in the Rules of Procedure referred to in Secretary of State's telegram. Nehru sought to justify them as not inconsistent with the Mission plan; and professed the desire of himself and his colleagues to get the Muslim League into the Constituent Assembly. He spoke of the possible partition of the Punjab and Bengal, if agreement was not reached. I emphasised to him especially the necessity to maintain the integrity of the Indian army, which might be affected if there was an open breach between the Congress and the League

3. He described the statement of His Majesty's Government as a courageous document,<sup>3</sup> which would have far-reaching effects. But he went on to speak of its lack of definition on many points, in paragraphs 10,<sup>4</sup> 11<sup>5</sup> and 12<sup>6</sup> I explained to him the reason why His Majesty's Government could not at present be more definite and what was in their minds.

- 3 The statement of 20 February 1947 announced the British Government's "definite intention to take the necessary steps to effect the transference of power into responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948."
- 4 This paragraph implied that although the Cabinet Mission's proposals would be given a trial initially, if it should appear that a constitution as per their proposals could not be worked out by June 1948, the British Government would transfer the powers of the Central Government in British India, on the due date, either "as a whole to some form of Central Government for British India or in some areas to the existing Provincial Governments, or in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people."
- 5 "Although the final transfer of authority may not take place until June 1948, preparatory measures must be put in hand in advance. It is important that the efficiency of the civil administration should be maintained and that the defence of India should be fully provided for. But inevitably, as the process of transfer proceeds, it will become progressively more difficult to carry out to the letter all the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935. Legislation will be introduced in due course to give effect to the final transfer of power."
- 6 "In regard to the Indian States, as was explicitly stated by the Cabinet Mission, His Majesty's Government do not intend to hand over their powers and obligations under paramountcy to any Government of British India. It is not intended to bring paramountcy, as a system, to a conclusion earlier than the date of the final transfer of power, but it is contemplated that for the intervening period the relations of the Crown with individual States may be adjusted by agreement."

4. He then spoke of the Muslim League Members remaining in the Central Government. He said that it depended on (a) whether the Muslim League joined the Constituent Assembly, and (b) what the position of the Central Government would be during the interim period. He presumed from paragraph 11 of His Majesty's Government's statement that there would be progressive development of the powers of the Central Government during the interim period. He said that the Congress would not press for an immediate answer to the request about the Muslim League remaining in the Central Government; but that the issue would have to be faced in the near future.

5. Nehru said that a meeting of the Congress Working Committee had been fixed for March 5th before the issue of His Majesty's Government's statement. He thought that there was no necessity to advance the date and that the statement could be considered by the Working Committee at that meeting.

Nehru was obviously impressed by the statement and conscious of the responsibility thrown on the Congress. The interview lasted for an hour.

Viceroy's recollection is that Nehru's argument was on lines that H M.G. has recognised that large bodies cannot be compelled into a constitution against their will, and that it was only logical that large minorities inside a province e.g. the Hindus in Bengal and the Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab could also not be compelled into an unacceptable constitution.<sup>7</sup> There was some argument on the interpretation of "parts of the country" in the last paragraph of the statement of December 6th.<sup>8</sup> Nehru argued that "parts of the country" could mean "parts of a province." Viceroy said that, that was certainly not the intention of

7. The Secretary of State wanted clarification of the Congress resolution which appeared to imply that though a province as a whole had a fair opportunity to exercise its option to enter a group under a new provincial constitution which gave fair representation in the legislature to all sections of population, parts of provinces as well as the Sikhs still had a right to refuse to accept such a decision. He regarded this as inconsistent with the Cabinet Mission's plan. He also wanted clarification of the rules of procedure which he felt were not consistent with the Cabinet Mission's plan.

8 "Should a Constitution come to be framed by a Constituent Assembly in which a large section of the Indian population had not been represented, His Majesty's Government could not of course contemplate—as the Congress have stated they would not contemplate—forcing such a Constitution upon any unwilling parts of the country."

H.M.G. and did not override the original statement in which existing provinces were treated as a whole. Viceroy added that if the statement of the A.I.C.C.<sup>9</sup> was merely meant to emphasize the obvious truth that any constitution, provincial, group or central, could only be formed with the consent of the great majority of the people, Congress should say so; but that if it implied that a part of a province could secede during the process of constitution making, this was entirely inconsistent with the acceptance of the Mission's plan. Viceroy added that it was up to the Congress to make their intentions clear to the League. Viceroy does not remember any definite arguments about the Rules of Procedure.

9 The A.I.C.C. statement of 6 January 1947 accepted the interpretation of the British Government in regard to the procedure to be followed in the sections but insisted that this procedure should not involve any compulsion of a province and that the rights of the Sikhs in the Punjab should not be jeopardised In the event of any attempt at such compulsion, a province, or part of a province, would have the right to take such action as might be deemed necessary to give effect to the wishes of the people concerned.

## 6. On the Policy of the British Government<sup>2</sup>

The statement made by Prime Minister Attlee in the House of Commons on February 20th in regard to Indian policy has received and is receiving the earnest attention of all those who are vitally interested in bringing the present transitional period to a satisfactory conclusion.<sup>2</sup> The statement is obscure in some places and requires careful consideration. The outstanding feature of it, however, is the decision of the British Government to transfer power to Indian hands not later than June 1948. It has further been stated that preparatory measures must be put in hand in advance. This is important, as only thus can we secure a rapid

1 Statement to the press, New Delhi, 22 February 1947 *National Herald*, 23 February 1947

2 Attlee had announced the British Government's desire to hand over responsibility to authorities established by a constitution approved by all parties in India in accordance with the Cabinet Mission's plan, though there was as yet no clear prospect that such a constitution and such authorities would emerge As for the Indian States, the British Government did not intend to hand over their powers and obligations under paramountcy to any government of British India.

and effective transference of power within this period. My colleagues and I are giving the fullest thought to this statement, and early next month the Congress Working Committee will meet and give its considered views on the new situation that has arisen.<sup>3</sup>

I should like to say, however, even at this stage that the decision of the British Government is a wise and courageous one. The clear and definite declaration that the final transference of power will take place by a date not later than June 1948 not only removes all misconception and suspicion, but also brings reality and a certain dynamic quality to the present situation in India. That decision will undoubtedly have far-reaching consequences and puts a burden and responsibility on all concerned. It is a challenge to all of us and we shall try to meet it bravely in the spirit of that challenge. I trust that we shall all endeavour to get out of the ruts and end the internal conflicts that have frustrated our efforts and delayed our advance and accept this burden and responsibility keeping only the independence and advancement of India in view.

The work of the Constituent Assembly must now be carried on with greater speed so that the new and independent India may take shape and be clothed with a constitution worthy of her and bringing relief and opportunity to all her children. In this great work we invite afresh all those who have kept aloof and we ask all to be partners in this joint and historic undertaking casting aside fear and suspicion, which ill become a great people on the eve of freedom. The Constituent Assembly, however constituted, can only proceed with its work on a voluntary basis. There can be no compulsion, except the compulsion of events, which none can ignore. The moment British rule goes, the responsibility for the governance of India must inevitably rest on her people and their representatives alone. They will have to shoulder that responsibility. Why then should we not accept this responsibility now and work together to find integrated solutions of our problems? No external authority is going to help or hinder us in future.

The British Government on behalf of their people have expressed their goodwill and good wishes to the people of India. We have had a long past of conflict and ill will. But we earnestly hope that this past is over. We look forward to a peaceful and cooperative transition and to the establishment of close and friendly relations with the British people for the mutual advantage of both countries and for the advancement of the cause of peace and freedom all over the world.

3 The Congress Working Committee met in New Delhi from 6 to 8 March 1947.

**7. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
22.2.1947

My dear Lord Wavell,

This morning's paper contains a press agency report (from the American A.P., I think) which has distressed me. This is wholly unwarranted and wrong. I am issuing a statement to the press in regard to it and I enclose a copy of it for your information.<sup>2</sup> I regret greatly that such insinuations should have been made about you and that I should have been associated with them. Our close association during the past few months has brought us nearer to each other and, for my part, I have a high regard for you. I am sorry that this association is going to end soon.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 J N Collection.

2 See the following item

**8. Wavell and Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>**

A news agency report published on Saturday morning purporting to emanate from a source close to me is unjust both to Lord Wavell and to me.<sup>2</sup> Regarding our reactions to Prime Minister Attlee's statement, my colleagues and I will no doubt express our views. What has been

- 1 Statement to the press, New Delhi, 22 February 1947. *The Statesman*, 23 February 1947
- 2 The appointment of Lord Mountbatten as the new Viceroy of India was announced on 20 February 1947, simultaneously with the statement on Indian policy. A report of the Associated Press of America, published on 22 February, accredited a source close to Nehru with holding the view that the change in Viceregency was "a move to placate Pandit Nehru, who has long been known to regard Lord Wavell as an obstruction to a settlement with the Muslim League." The report also said that Mountbatten and Nehru had become personal friends during the latter's visit to Singapore in March 1946.

stated in the news agency report is likely to mislead opinion. What I am concerned about specially, however, are the references to Lord Wavell and to Lord Mountbatten. There have been differences of opinion during the past months, but I have never doubted Lord Wavell's sincerity and desire to serve India's interests. He has carried a heavy burden and has worked hard. I have a high regard for him and I shall be sorry in many ways to part with him.

I met Lord Mountbatten during my brief visit to Singapore last year and he was very courteous to me. I met him once again as he was passing through Delhi to discuss certain matters relating to the transport of paddy from Java to India. These are the only two meetings I have had with him so far.

I regret that unauthorized and often incorrect speculations should be made at a time when we have to face a new situation which requires the fullest consideration.

## 9. To V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
February 23, 1947

My dear Krishna,

I have received a number of letters from you in recent weeks. The last batch was given to me by Ratan Nehru. I shall not write in any detail because I am terribly busy. I find it very difficult to keep pace with all the various activities I am indulging in. It is not merely a question of work but of a variety of responsibilities I have been in Delhi now for many months. I have been wanting to go to Allahabad for a day at least and I have not been able to do it. I fear this rush on my time will continue. You must not misunderstand me if you do not hear from me frequently. I take it that you are coming here for the Asian Conference and will then stay on for a while afterwards. It will be impossible to have much of a talk during the Conference.

2. I do not know what your reactions are to Attlee's statement in Parliament made on February 20th. Last evening I issued a statement<sup>2</sup> which you must have seen. I have no doubt in my own mind that on the whole

1 V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, NMML

2 See *ante*, item 6.

this decision of the British Government is a good one having regard to all the circumstances Two possibilities open out. If the Muslim League comes into the Constituent Assembly then we function within the terms of the Cabinet Mission's Statement of May 16th, 1946 with all its limitations but with the advantage of having the League in.

3 If, on the other hand, the League does not come in, as is likely, then the Constituent Assembly in effect functions for the areas represented in it and the limitations of the May 16th statement disappear. That is to say that although the Assembly will not necessarily function for the whole of India, it will be much freer to do what it likes for the parts of India it represents The questions of sections or grouping and a limited Centre do not arise.

4. In such an event the real difficulty will be about Western Bengal and Southern Punjab. Provincially speaking, it might be said that Bengal and Punjab, being not properly represented in the Constituent Assembly,<sup>3</sup> are not bound by the Assembly's decisions, but Southern Punjab and Western Bengal are properly represented and have no intention of being cut off from the Indian Union Inevitably this means a division of Punjab and Bengal, bringing the richer parts of both these provinces, including the city of Calcutta of course, into the Union The truncated Pakistan that remains will hardly be a gift worth having

5. Even if parts of Bengal and Punjab as well as Sind choose to keep out of the Union, it is obvious that there must be some kind of a link between them and the Union and in any event they simply cannot separate wholly overnight. Even after a decision is made they are too closely connected in a hundred ways with the structure of India for any sound division. Bengal as a province is in a bad way altogether. It has huge deficit budgets and is continually taking large sums of money from the Centre. I do not see how it can carry on as a separate entity. Apart from its financial difficulties, the whole province is deteriorating rapidly. No decent person wants to continue in service there. It is all a ramp and a racket.

3 All the members of the Muslim League, who were elected to the Constituent Assembly, boycotted its proceedings in pursuance of the League's resolution of 29 July 1946 withdrawing its earlier acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's proposals Of the 60 seats allotted to Bengal in the Constituent Assembly, Muslim League won 32; in the Punjab, it secured 15 seats out of 28

6. We have to face difficulties on every front but the chief virtue of the new statement of the British Government is that it makes everybody sit up and come face to face with the fact that the British will soon be not there for them to refer to. We have to go ahead with the Constituent Assembly with a definite time-table. Most of the States are likely to come in. What I do not know at present is what the future of the Interim Government is going to be.

7 Presumably Mountbatten will bring some kind of instructions.

8. It is clear that the Interim Government cannot continue as it is if the Muslim League refuses to come into the Constituent Assembly and at the same time is noncooperative in the Cabinet and in Government and direct-actionist in certain parts of the country as in the Punjab.<sup>4</sup> People cannot function at the same time as Members of Government and members of the opposition and rebels. That is why we had to write explicitly to the British Government on this issue<sup>5</sup>. That position holds but with one major difference. In view of this recent development and Mountbatten coming here soon, it seems undesirable to press that issue immediately. From every point of view it is worth while to make one more effort to get the Muslim League into the Constituent Assembly. If they refuse then the question still remains as to how the Interim Government is going to function in future. If there is going to be a marked change in the position of the Viceroy and he keeps a back seat, it obviously means that there must be some other formal leadership of the Cabinet. If the Muslim League Members accept this, there is a possibility of continuing. If they do not accept it then it is quite impossible for us to work together in the Government. They will have to go.

9. Thus we are not immediately pressing the issue of the Muslim League Members quitting the Government of India but we have made it clear that this point has to be settled if not now then two or three weeks later when Mountbatten has come.

10 Indeed the next month should lead to a clarification of the situation. We ought to know how the Government of India will function,

4 On 24 January 1947, alarmed at the collection of arms by semi-military organisations, the Punjab Government banned the Muslim League National Guards and Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh. Later the Muslim League launched a movement in the province for the restoration of civil liberties and removal of the coalition ministry.

5 See *ante*, item 2

whether the Muslim League will remain there or not, whether they will come into the Constituent Assembly or not, and the future working of the Constituent Assembly itself.

11 The Constituent Assembly meets probably in the last week of April.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile the Advisory Committee<sup>7</sup> and some sub-committees are going to meet. Before the Assembly meets we shall have to be perfectly clear on all these matters and we should have to have our drafts ready for its consideration. We should like to finish the work of the Constituent Assembly by the end of this year. This can easily be done if the Muslim League is not there. Otherwise it might be more difficult.

12. I am writing to you separately about your letter dated 9th February.<sup>8</sup> Please do not take things too seriously. At any rate, so far as I am concerned do not take any step which might create difficulties, await developments and come here a little before the Asian Conference. As I have said above, you should come here with the intention of staying some time after the Conference also.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

This letter is badly drafted and badly typed. Still I am sending it. J.N.

6 The third preliminary session of the Constituent Assembly began in New Delhi on 28 April 1947

7 The Advisory Committee of the Constituent Assembly on minorities, fundamental rights and tribal, excluded and partially excluded areas met on 27 February under the chairmanship of Vallabhbhai Patel. It appointed five sub-committees to deal with its work

8 See *post*, item 14

## 10. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
24th February 1947

Dear Lord Wavell,

You must have seen a statement I have issued giving my reactions to Mr. Attlee's statement in the House of Commons of February 20th.<sup>2</sup>

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 9, pp 794-796

2 For Nehru's statement of 22 February 1947 see *ante*, item 6

Normally I would have waited till the meeting of the Congress Working Committee. But I thought that a clear declaration at this stage was desirable and helpful.

2. I have deliberately not referred in my statement to many matters which are by no means clear. I wanted to emphasise the dominant feature of Mr. Attlee's statement from which other consequences naturally flow. These other matters will have to be considered so that there might be no misunderstanding in the future

3. In the course of our conversation on the 21st evening you communicated to me a message on behalf of H M G. This referred to the joint letter we had sent to you pointing out that the continuance of the Muslim League Members in the Interim Government was incompatible with the British Cabinet's plan or with any effective functioning of the Government<sup>3</sup> You stated that H M G had postponed a reply to it in view of the developments that had taken place; further that while the resolution passed by the All India Congress Committee on January 6th accepted the British Government's statement of December 6th, there were some points in it which seemed to take away somewhat from that full acceptance. It was also pointed out that some rules made by the Constituent Assembly were also inconsistent with the provisions of the Cabinet Delegation's Scheme and appeared to encroach on the powers of the sections and groups<sup>4</sup>

4 I pointed out to you then that there was some misapprehension about this matter and in effect there was no such variance. If you so wish it I can consider any particular points in detail though I hardly think that this is necessary in view of the statement made by Mr. Attlee on 20th February I might, however, draw your attention to the fact that this criticism of the All India Congress Committee's resolution and the rules of the Constituent Assembly has come more than six weeks

3 See *ante*, item 2

4 Wavell informed Nehru on 21 February 1947 that rules of procedure Nos 19 and 35, passed by the Constituent Assembly, were inconsistent with the Cabinet Mission's plan since they had the effect of giving the Union Assembly a deciding voice in a large number of matters within provincial constitution which under paragraph 19(v) of the Mission's plan were to be decided by sections in the light of the Advisory Committee's report Rule 63 was also stated to be contrary to the spirit of the Mission's plan "since it imports existing Provincial Legislatures, which are weighted, into decision as to whether groups shall be formed," whereas the object was that "decisions should be by unweighted representation of provincial population"

after they were passed. It is easy to criticise a complicated set of rules or a long resolution. But I am quite sure that the objections raised have no force whatever. We had stated quite clearly in the resolution and subsequently that we had accepted the statement of December 6th. It is easy enough to remove doubts if there is an intention to understand and to cooperate. But it is not possible to do so if the intention is just to find fault and in no event to cooperate. We have tried in the past to meet all legitimate objections and criticisms so as to gain the cooperation of all in the work of the Constituent Assembly. We shall continue to do so because obviously it is desirable to have that cooperation.

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5. We sent to you our joint letter asking for the resignation of the Muslim League Members in the Cabinet because it had become impossible in the interest of good government and progress to have a Central Government which was divided and in which one group functioned as an opposition both in governmental activities and in the country. This was contrary to the Cabinet Delegation's Scheme and it had a disruptive influence on the administration. We have seen the extraordinary spectacle of Members of the Central Government leading and encouraging "Direct Action" and disobedience of laws against the provincial government of the Punjab.<sup>5</sup> This is still continuing openly and something similar is now being attempted in the Frontier Province. It is difficult for me to conceive of any Central Government whose members function in this way. It is obvious that this matter requires urgent decision. Mr. Attlee's statement throws no light upon it.

6. Nevertheless I told you in the course of our interview that I would not press for an immediate answer to our joint letter because we were anxious, in view of the new situation that had arisen, not to bar the door to joint and cooperative working. Mr. Attlee's statement in some ways overrides the Cabinet Mission's plan. As I understand it, it means this: If the Muslim League comes into the Constituent Assembly, then the Scheme of May 16th will continue to apply. If the League still refuses to come in, then other consequences follow.

7 This will have to be cleared up in the near future to enable us to

5. Following the Punjab Muslim League's decision to defy the Government ban and court arrest, Ghaznafar Ali declared in February 1947 that the movement was being launched to regain civil liberties. He referred to the Constituent Assembly as a Hindu-dominated body whose decisions would not be binding upon the League. Earlier, Liaquat Ali had said that the problems of India could not be solved unless the claims of the Muslims for Pakistan were conceded.

proceed rapidly with the work of constitution-making. We shall try our utmost to gain the cooperation of the Muslim League on the basis of the Cabinet Mission's Scheme of May 16th. If, however, we fail, we shall have to proceed on the other lines indicated or flowing from Mr. Attlee's statement. Whether the Interim Government can remain as it is or has to change will also depend on the developments indicated above. It is clear that the present position cannot be maintained.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**11. To Asaf Ali<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
24 February 1947

My dear Asaf,

I received your long letter which you began in Cairo on the 11th February and finished in London on the 15th. I have, of course, read it with the greatest interest and shared it with others. I have also received your telegrams to which I have replied.

2. You must have seen the full text of the statement I issued two days ago on Attlee's declaration in the House of Commons. The Congress Working Committee is meeting on March 5th to consider this matter. But all of us here considered that we should not delay issuing some kind of a statement, and so in consultation with others I issued my statement.

3. The reactions in India to Attlee's pronouncement are still rather mixed. I feel, however, that it is a striking departure from the normal British policy and something has been done which cannot be undone. We may have troubles to face in the future from the British Government and others; indeed we are bound to have them. Nevertheless the responsibility is going to be ours in future and the time-limit forces the pace of events and will depend on the directive that Mountbatten will bring with him. Meanwhile we are not pressing for the resignation of the Muslim League Members of the Government. To do so now would close the door finally. Therefore we shall await Mountbatten's arrival and see how things shape themselves and then take such steps as may be necessary.

<sup>1</sup> J N Collection

4. Generally speaking our attitude is to make another effort to get the Muslim League together into the Constituent Assembly. If this succeeds, well and good, and we proceed according to the Cabinet Mission's plan of May 16th. If it fails, then that plan is superseded by Attlee's announcement and we go ahead with the Constituent Assembly. This Assembly will then not have the limitations in regard to sections and grouping and a weak Centre. But it will have a major limitation—the constitution it draws up will apply only to those areas which have participated in it. This will raise difficulties, but we cannot escape them. It may mean even a partition of Punjab and Bengal. It is likely that a truncated Pakistan, which will emerge, will not be acceptable to anybody.

5. If, in spite of our efforts, the Muslim League continues to be non-cooperative and direct-actionist, then it cannot obviously continue in the Interim Government. At present they are carrying on an aggressive direct action campaign in Punjab and the Frontier Province. It is fantastic for Members of the Central Government to be leaders of revolt in provinces

6. I do not know how you expected me to send Chand by the next plane to Washington. This kind of thing simply cannot be done. I had explained to you that she could not go, and the reasons hold. In any event it passes my comprehension how I can send her suddenly overriding every rule and regulation quite apart from other considerations. The wording of your telegram was rather odd for an Ambassador. Your telegram, as is usually done, was circulated to various departments. People reading it must have wondered at your phraseology and your sudden demand

7. What you have written about Egypt is very much before us. I wish we could send someone there as you suggest. I fear, however, that we must wait for further developments in India and in the Interim Government before we can take any such step. Any appointment at present involves all manner of approaches to various parties including the Viceroy.

8. I was interested to read of your interview with the Aga Khan. I am in entire agreement with him in what he told you.

9. The Princes seem to be sobering down and the recent British announcement has shaken them up a little. Probably most of them will join the Constituent Assembly

10. You will realise that these days are rather critical here and we are going to be desperately busy. The Asian Conference is coming soon. That will be a unique and historical occasion. We are having very good response and a large number of eminent and distinguished men will attend.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 12. To Mahatma Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
24 February 1947

Dear Bapu,

Thank you for your letter of February 18th. I enclose a cheque for Rs. 5,000/- from the fund placed at my disposal by the ex-Maharaja of Nepal.<sup>2</sup> He earmarked this for the relief of Gurkhas in distress in East Bengal. I am informing the Gurkha League that I have sent this money on to you.

I have not yet seen what you wrote about the Benares University on Malaviyaji's death.<sup>3</sup> I am rather worried about my chairmanship of the memorial committee. Govind thinks in large terms of getting very big donations. I suppose it will not be difficult to collect 15 or 20 lakhs. But he thinks in terms of crores.

You must have seen my statement on the new declaration made by the British Government. That statement was considered carefully by all our colleagues in the Interim Government minus, of course, the Muslim Leaguers. We wanted very much to consult Kripalani before a statement was issued and he was to have come here. But then he fell ill at

1 Pyarelal Papers.

2 Maharaja Judha Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana was the Prime Minister of Nepal from 1932 to 1945. He made a considerable grant from his privy purse for the Gurkha refugees.

3 Mahatma Gandhi wrote in the *Harijan* of 8 December 1946, "Malaviyaji has left an imperishable memorial of himself in the Kashu Viswa Vidyalaya. To put it on a stable foundation, to secure its evolutionary growth, will surely be the most suitable memorial that can be erected by us to the memory of the great patriot. He spared no pains in making a big collection for his pet child. Everyone who reveres his memory can give a helping hand to the labour of continuing the collection."

Allahabad. We felt that something should be said soon both for India and abroad. Attlee's statement contains much that is indefinite and likely to give trouble. But I am convinced that it is in the final analysis a brave and definite statement. It meets our oft-repeated demand for quitting India. It may not be so exactly as we would have liked it. But the real thing is that they have finally decided and announced that they are quitting. Whatever their motives might be, they cannot go back on this and everything that happens from now onwards must be governed by it.

The present position is that if the Muslim League comes into the Constituent Assembly, which is very unlikely, then the Cabinet Mission's Statement of May 16th applies. Otherwise the limitations of that Statement go and the Constituent Assembly functions really as a sovereign body without sections and groups and a limited Centre. But there is one limitation: that its decisions will apply only to the parts represented in it. More or less this was what you said when we met last. This may result in the Indian Union being first established for the whole of India except Bengal, the Punjab and Sind. Of course the Union constitution will apply to or rather be open to all; but these provinces may not choose to adhere to it. If so the second question that arises is that those parts of Bengal and Punjab which are fully represented in the Constituent Assembly (Western Bengal and Southern Punjab) should be parts of the Union. That means a partition of Punjab and Bengal. It is unlikely that Jinnah or the Muslim League will agree to this truncated Pakistan which can never succeed economically or otherwise. They will thus have to make a choice ultimately between this and joining the Indian Union possibly on special terms. In other words the position of Bengal and Punjab in such an event approximates to that of an Indian State.

Matters will move swiftly now or at any rate after Mountbatten comes.<sup>4</sup> We do not yet know what special directive has been given to Mountbatten by the British Cabinet. Logically this should be to function as a constitutional head only and to allow the Government to act as a Dominion Government. That would mean the Government having a leader. This again would bring matters with the Muslim League to a head.

The Working Committee is meeting on the 5th March and we shall take no other step till then. Our general outlook at present is to approach privately some of the Muslim League leaders and try to induce them to come into the Constituent Assembly. If they refuse to come in, then

<sup>4</sup> Mountbatten was sworn in as Viceroy on 24 March 1947

the question of their remaining in the Interim Government has to be faced afresh. For the moment we are not pressing for their resignation as this would, of course, put an end to all talk of cooperation. But anyhow this matter should be settled one way or the other in the course of the next month.

We have to go ahead now rapidly with the Constituent Assembly. We shall try to work to a time-table which means finishing the constitution-making by the end of the year.

Your advice at this critical moment would help us greatly. But you are too far away for consultation and you refuse to move out of East Bengal. Still if you could convey to us your ideas on the subject, we would be very grateful.

As I have already written to you, the Asian Conference begins on the 23rd March and will last for at least ten days. We are having a very distinguished and representative gathering then from almost all the countries of Asia. If you do not come to it your absence will be keenly felt by all.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

### 13. Cable to the Editor, "Cavalcade"<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
25 February 1947

Thank you for your telegram.<sup>2</sup> Have already issued statement regarding Prime Minister Attlee's pronouncement. We welcome this final decision which will help in removing old distrust and suspicion and lay foundations of healthier relations between India and Britain. We look forward to continuance of economic and cultural contacts between our respective peoples.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1 J N. Papers, N M M L

2 The editor of the British newsmagazine, *Cavalcade*, had asked for a personal message from Nehru to the British people on his reactions to the withdrawal of British power.

14. To V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
27th February 1947

My dear Krishna,

Vellodi<sup>2</sup> is taking this letter. It was my intention to write to you at some length. But that is impossible now. In any event I hope to see you here in another three weeks' time or even less.

2. As I have written to you previously, Runganadhan has been asked to resign and Vellodi will act as High Commissioner. I am not sure that Vellodi himself knows about this yet, though I propose to mention it to him just before he goes. I think you had better not mention it to anyone yet till a formal intimation comes.
3. Whatever the virtues or sins of Attlee's statement might be, it has shaken up people here and forced them to think furiously. The Princes are meeting here in large numbers and again there is an attempt on the part of Bhopal and his supporters to sabotage the Constituent Assembly insofar as they can do it.<sup>3</sup> They have been encouraged by Attlee's references to the States and probably imagine that they can get better terms by standing out of the Constituent Assembly.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N M.M.L.

2 M K Vellodi (b 1896); I.C.S.; Joint Secretary, Board of Revenue, Madras, 1933, Chief Secretary, Government of Orissa, 1939, Deputy High Commissioner for India in U.K., 1945, Secretary, Ministry of States, Government of India, October 1948-November 1949, Chief Minister, Hyderabad, 1949-1952; Secretary, Ministry of Works, Housing and Supply, 1953; Defence Secretary, 1953-57, Cabinet Secretary, 1957-58, Ambassador to Switzerland 1958-62

3 On 27 February 1947, the Committee of States Ministers adopted a resolution recommending termination of the Princes' dialogue with the Negotiating Committee of the Constituent Assembly, in view of the insistence in the British Government's statement on the functioning of the Constituent Assembly as a fully representative body. This resolution, which was reportedly drafted at Bhopal, was rejected by the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes on 28 February.

4. Commenting on the British Government's statement the Nawab of Bhopal said on 21 February 1947, "Once more I am glad to say that a pronouncement has been formally made that paramountcy will disappear when Great Britain withdraws itself from the Indian administrative scene and that the States will resume their independence"

some other Princes object to this. We are meeting them day after tomorrow and are likely to have a fairly lively conference.<sup>5</sup> Bhopal, the cleverest of them, wants to help the Muslim League as far as possible. C P. Ramaswami Aiyar continues to play an intricate and double game and generally gives trouble. Behind them all is the Political Department intriguing and trying to put a spanner into everything.

4. The Muslim League is mum and Jinnah has chosen this moment for a little cruise in the Arabian Sea<sup>6</sup> I doubt very much if they will come into the Constituent Assembly. They imagine that they can exercise much more pressure from outside.

5. As the tempo of events is moving much faster, most of us are thinking of finishing the work of the Constituent Assembly by September next. In this work I shall require your help and I hope you will be able to stay some time with us here. Please, therefore, come prepared for a stay and don't try to rush back. Not only for the Constituent Assembly, but for even so many other matters your presence here will be extraordinarily helpful to me.

6. While we talk about the Muslim League and the States, the economic situation is deteriorating fast. Famine again stares us in the face in many parts of the country<sup>7</sup> and labour is terribly restive. Our budget is a deficit one and there is a huge gap between revenue and expenditure.<sup>8</sup> The Pay Commission is recommending large increments of salaries to Government servants in the lower grades which probably mean an extra 25 crores. This will affect wages and salaries everywhere. It is

5 The States Committee of the Constituent Assembly met the States Negotiating Committee on 1 March 1947. See *post*, section 5, item 7.

6 Prominent members of the Muslim League refrained from commenting on the British Government's announcement, but a spokesman of the League was reported as calling for a new approach "on the basis of two sovereign States coming together for all common purposes by voluntary agreement" Jinnah, addressing a group of Muslim refugees from Bihar on 23 February 1947, declared that the League "will not yield an inch in their demand for Pakistan" He then sailed from Karachi on 25 February, reaching Bombay on 28 February.

7. Severe shortage of both wheat and rice was expected owing to the failure of *kharif* and *rabi* crops in 1946. The rust disease had badly affected the wheat crop in Central India. The wheat and rice rations in many areas had to be reduced

8 The budget proposals, announced on 28 February 1947, envisaged a total expenditure of Rs 327 88 crores and a net deficit of Rs 16 96 crores.

good that this increase should take place, but for the moment it makes it difficult to provide for development schemes.

7. I should like you to arrange with Vellodi to send gift parcels of food and clothing to the Indians in Germany. I want this done on my behalf for which I shall pay, or rather I want you to pay from my account. Please make arrangements for this so that periodical parcels might be sent, more specially to Nambiar.

8. The Asian Conference should result in the formation of some kind of an organisation. Inevitably it will have to be rather a loose organisation with branches in various countries communicating on cultural, economic and other matters. Could you think about this and draft something which we might consider when you come here? It might be on the lines of the Institute of Pacific Affairs,<sup>9</sup> though I should like it to go a little further than that.

9 I have just had an urgent message from Dr Evatt,<sup>10</sup> the Australian Foreign Minister, suggesting a conference between Indian and Australian representatives to consider problems of South-East Asia and Japan. He includes defence among the subjects for consideration. I have sent him a brief reply welcoming the idea but suggesting that such a conference might take place some time later. He has just delivered a speech too in which he seems to indicate some kind of closer association of the South-East Asian countries.<sup>11</sup>

10 The two men that Mountbatten is bringing with him, Mieville and General Ismay,<sup>12</sup> are not the type which inspires confidence regarding

9 Presumably the reference is to the Institute of Pacific Relations at the University of British Columbia, Canada. It was founded in 1925 to conduct non-governmental research and discussion on political, social and economic problems of Asian and Pacific countries

10 Herbert Vere Evatt (1894-1965), Attorney-General and Minister of External Affairs of Australia, 1941-49, Deputy Prime Minister, 1946-49, Chairman, Palestine Commission, 1947, President, United Nations General Assembly, 1948, leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, 1951-60.

11 Speaking in the Australian House of Representatives on 26 February 1947, Evatt suggested the formation in South-East Asia and the Western Pacific of an appropriate regional organisation concerned with the interests of all the peoples of this area. He wished Australia to work for the harmonious association of democratic States in South-East Asia.

12 Hastings Lionel Ismay (1887-1965); Military Secretary to Viceroy, 1931-33, Chief of Staff to Winston Churchill, 1940-45, Chief of Staff to Mountbatten in India, March-November 1947, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 1951-52; Secretary-General of N.A.T.O., 1952-57.

Mountbatten's outlook. As you have met Mountbatten before, it might perhaps be worth while for you to see him in London before he comes. Indeed I am told that you have met him already.<sup>13</sup> Although personal factors do not ultimately make much difference, still in the short run they do affect events. Much will depend on what kind of a directive Mountbatten is bringing with him, and how he intends to function here. He can obviously make things easier or more difficult.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

13 Krishna Menon had met Mountbatten in London on 25 February 1947.

## 15. Congress Working Committee Resolution on British Government's Statement of 20 February 1947

*Hand-written Draft for the Working Committee, Delhi, 8 March 1947*      *Final Draft for the Working Committee, 8 March 1947*      *Resolution passed by the Working Committee at Delhi on 8 March 1947*

- I
1. The Working Committee welcome the declaration made on behalf of the British Government of their definite intention to transfer power finally by a date not later than June 1948 and to take steps to that end in advance. Such a transfer involves the complete withdrawal of British troops from India before that date. In order to carry out this withdrawal progressively and effectively, steps should be taken to begin the process as early as possible, and also to replace British officers in the Indian army by Indian officers. Some British officers may, however, be retained in an advisory capacity.

II

1. The Working Committee welcome the declaration made on behalf of the British Government of their definite intention to transfer power finally by a date not later than June 1948 and to take steps to that end in advance.

III

1. The Working Committee welcome the declaration made on behalf of the British Government of their definite intention to transfer power finally by a date not later than June 1948 and to take steps to that end in advance.

2. The transfer of power, in order to be smooth, should be preceded by the recognition in practice of the Interim Government as a Dominion Government, with effective control over the services and administration, and the Viceroy and Governor-General functioning as the constitutional head of the Government. The Central Government must necessarily function as a cabinet with joint responsibility. Any other arrangement is incompatible with good government and is peculiarly dangerous during a transitional period full of political and economic crises. The experience of the past few months has demonstrated that the lack of joint cabinet responsibility leads to inefficiency and disjointedness in the administration and a feeling of uncertainty in the country.

3. The country is facing today grave crises, both political and economic, and the position in regard to

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food and coal<sup>4</sup> is extremely serious, requiring swift and effective handling. Any lack of cohesion at the centre is likely to have grave results. The period of transition should also be as brief as possible, as a prolongation of it will lead to further uncertainty and instability, and a deterioration of the situation.

4 The Congress has already expressed its full acceptance of the British Cabinet Mission's Scheme of May 16, 1946 and has further accepted the interpretations put upon it by the British Cabinet on December 6, 1946. In accordance therewith, the Constituent Assembly has begun functioning and has appointed various committees to

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4 See *Selected Works* (Second Series), Vol I, pp 481, 484-489.

carry on its work. It has become urgently necessary now to expedite this work so that the constitution for an Indian Union and its constituent units should be finally prepared and given effect to well within the stated period to facilitate the final transfer of power.

work. It has become all the more essential now to expedite this work so that the constitution for an Indian Union and its constituent units should be finally prepared and given effect to well within the stated period to facilitate the final transfer of power.

5 The Working Committee welcome the decision of many of the States to join the Constituent Assembly and trust that all the States and their peoples will be effectively represented in this task of making a constitution for an Indian Union. They would invite afresh the representatives of the Muslim League, who have been elected to the

4 The Working Committee welcome the decision of a number of States to join the Constituent Assembly and trust that all the States and their peoples will be effectively represented in this task of making a constitution for an Indian Union. The Committee invite afresh the representatives of the Muslim League, who have been elected to the Con-

work.<sup>5</sup> It has become all the more essential now to expedite this work so that the constitution for an Indian Union and its constituent units should be finally prepared and given effect to well within the stated period to facilitate the final transfer of power

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<sup>5</sup> The Constituent Assembly set up the States Committee on 21 December 1946, the Staff and Finance, Credentials and House Committees on 23 December 1946, and the Committee to recommend suitable constitutional changes and Press Gallery Committee on 7 January 1947, Steering Committee on 21 January 1947 and Advisory Committee on 24 January 1947, the Committees to recommend the order of the further business of the Assembly and to examine the scope of Union subjects on 25 January 1947, the Union Constitution and Provincial Constitution Committees and the Ad Hoc Committee on citizenship clause on 30 April 1947 and the Ad Hoc Committee on National Flag on 23 June 1947

Constituent Assembly, to join in historic task. The work of the Constituent Assembly is essentially voluntary, and the constitution that will be framed must represent the joint and integrated will of all those who participate.

6. The Working Committee have frequently stated that there can or should be no compulsion in the making of or the giving effect to a constitution for India. It is the fear of compulsion and coercion that has given rise to distrust and suspicion and conflict. If this fear goes, as it must, it will be easy to determine India's future so as to safeguard the rights of all communities and give equal opportunities to all. It must be understood that the constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly will apply only to those areas who accept it. It must also be understood that any area which accepts this constitution and desires to join the Union can-

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not be prevented from doing so. Thus there must be no compulsion either way, and the people will themselves decide their future. This peaceful and cooperative method is the only way to decide democratically and with the maximum of consent. It is clear that no political party in India can gain its ends by violent and coercive methods, for violence invokes further violence and conflict and results in misery and grievous injury to the nation and all the parties concerned

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which accepts the constitution and desires to join the Union cannot be prevented from doing so. Thus there must be no compulsion either way, and the people will themselves decide their future. This peaceful and cooperative method is the only way to make democratic decisions with the maximum of consent.

6. In this hour when final decisions have to be taken, and the future of India has to be shaped by Indian minds and hands, the Working Committee earnestly call upon all parties and groups, and all Indians generally, to discard violent and coercive methods, and cooperate together peacefully and democratically in the making of a constitution. The time for decision has come and no one
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there should be no compulsion of one can stop it or stand by and remain injured in this way, and it may well be that a mutually satisfactory solution will be found. In any event a solution will be found for the time for decision has come and no one can stop it or stand by and remain unaffected. The end of an era is at hand and a new age will soon begin. Let this dawn of the new age be ushered in bravely, leaving hates and discords in the dead past.

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## 16. Invitation to the Muslim League<sup>1</sup>

In view of new developments which are leading to a swift transfer of power in India, it has become incumbent on the people of India to prepare themselves jointly and cooperatively for this change, so that this may be effected peacefully and to the advantage of all. The Working Committee, therefore, invite the All-India Muslim League to nominate representatives<sup>2</sup> to meet representatives of the Congress<sup>3</sup> in order to devise means to meet it.

The Working Committee will keep<sup>4</sup> in close touch with the representatives of the Sikhs and other groups concerned, with a view to cooperating with them in the steps that may have to be taken and in safeguarding their interests.

1. Resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee at Delhi on 8 March 1947. *Congress Bulletin*, 26 March 1947, pp 4-5. The original draft was prepared by Nehru.
2. "four or more" omitted from Nehru's draft
3. Nehru's draft read "...to meet their representatives "
4. Nehru's draft read "desire to keep.."

## 17. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
9 March 1947

Dear Lord Wavell,

During the last three days the Congress Working Committee have anxiously considered the situation in the country and more specially the announcement made by Mr. Attlee on February 20th. They have passed some resolutions and I am enclosing three of these for your information<sup>2</sup> I hope you will be good enough to send them to His Majesty's Government.

1 *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 9, pp 897-899.

2 For the first two resolutions see *ante*, items 15 and 16 The third resolution related to the division of the Punjab

## THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AND THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

2. You will notice that the Working Committee have welcomed Mr. Attlee's statement. We have purposely not gone into any details because the major decisions mentioned in it govern the situation. There are many matters which are not clear. Presumably light will be thrown upon them later on. For the present we did not think it necessary to draw special attention to any of these matters. It is clear, however, that an early decision will be required in regard to our future work in the Interim Government.

3. It is our intention, as you will observe from one of the resolutions sent, to approach the Muslim League for a joint meeting to consider the situation. We want to do everything in our power to get the League representatives into the Constituent Assembly, so that all of us might function in terms of the Cabinet Mission's Statement of May 16th, 1946.

4. If unfortunately this is not possible, then we shall try to lay down a course of action which avoids friction and conflict. It is with this object in view that we have sought a meeting with the League and have also suggested the division of the Punjab into two parts. This principle would, of course, apply to Bengal also

5. This proposal that we are making is not pleasant for us to contemplate, but such a course is preferable to an attempt by either party to impose its will upon the other. Recent events in the Punjab have demonstrated, if such demonstration was necessary, that it is not possible to coerce the non-Muslim minority in the province, just as it is not possible or desirable to coerce the others. We have suggested a way out which we consider fair to all parties<sup>3</sup>

6. In this connection I should like to remove a misapprehension Sir Stafford Cripps, in his speech in the House of Commons, has said that "we could not accept the forcing of unwilling Provinces into a united Indian Government if they have not been represented in the making of the constitution. To that principle which has the assent of the Congress, we understand, we adhere . "<sup>4</sup> Reference has been made here to "Provinces" There appears to be some confusion about the use of the

3 See post, section 7 (I), item 1

4. This was stated by Cripps on 5 March 1947 while referring to the British Government's statement of 6 December 1946 He added, "and if it should eventuate that a large group of Provinces—but not all—agree upon the form of Constitution then it may be necessary to hand over separately in areas which have not been fully represented "

word "Province" in this connection. The word used in the British Government's statement of December 6th, 1946, was "areas", and when Congress assent is referred to it can only have reference to areas. Indeed Sir Stafford Cripps himself refers to areas also in the course of his speech.

7. This distinction is important as both in Bengal and Punjab there are very large non-Muslim minorities. In the event of Bengal or Punjab, as provinces, deciding by a bare majority not to adhere to a Union, the question immediately arises about Western Bengal and Eastern Punjab which are predominantly non-Muslim areas and which have no intention whatever of separating themselves from the Indian Union

8. It is in order to get over all these difficulties that we have suggested a partition of the Punjab and the same principle applies to Bengal. If the Muslim League accepts the British Cabinet's Scheme of May 16th and cooperates in the Constituent Assembly, then this question does not arise in this form. But even so it is worth considering whether Bengal and Punjab should not both be divided into smaller provinces. In the event of the Muslim League not accepting the Cabinet Delegation's Scheme and not coming into the Constituent Assembly, the division of Bengal and Punjab becomes inevitable.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 18. To Liaquat Ali Khan<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
9 March 1947

My dear Nawabzada,

You will remember that some days ago I mentioned to you that I would like to have a talk with you. You said then that you were very busy with the budget and as soon as this was over we might have a talk. You have been very much occupied with budget matters till now. I suppose you are at present taking some rest in Dehra Dun. I imagine you will be back tomorrow. I hope that we shall have an opportunity

<sup>1</sup> J N Collection

THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AND THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

of having an informal talk about the various important matters facing the country.

2. Whatever our individual views might be in regard to these matters, it is obvious now that the time has come for a practical appreciation of events and speedy decision. The British are fading out of the picture and the burden of this decision must rest on all of us here. It seems desirable that we should face this situation squarely and not speak to each other from a distance. Whether we can come to an agreement or not, I do not know. But even if we fail, some solutions of the problem will be forthcoming because the time has come for them and they can no longer be delayed. In the ultimate analysis there may be two or three courses open to each one of us and we shall have to choose.

3. During the last three days the Congress Working Committee have given earnest consideration to the present situation and have passed a number of resolutions. I am enclosing a copy of three of them for your information.<sup>2</sup> This will give you some idea of how our minds have been working. We have tried hard to find a way out of the present tangle and have made certain suggestions which avoid any compulsion on any group.

4. It is no longer good enough for any of us to criticise the other from a distance. Hence my suggestion that you and I might meet to discuss these matters. I am not thinking so much of any long discussions in regard to details but rather a consideration of the broad aspects of the problem.

5. You will notice that the Congress Working Committee has passed a resolution inviting representatives of the Muslim League to meet Congress representatives. This invitation will no doubt be conveyed formally to the General Secretary of the Muslim League.<sup>3</sup> My own approach to you is entirely informal and apart from that formal approach.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2 These were the resolutions which Nehru sent to Wavell on 9 March 1947. See the preceding item.

3. Liaquat Ali Khan



## THE TRANSFER OF POWER



## 1. Account of Mountbatten's Interview with Nehru<sup>1</sup>

### I

Pandit Nehru struck me as most sincere.

I started off by asking him what, in his opinion, was the greatest problem confronting India at the present time. He surprised me by replying that the economic problem was the most serious. This was not being really gripped. The Forward Planning Department had been abolished 18 months ago, and he greatly regretted this.<sup>2</sup> He felt it essential to have an impartial man in charge, as the Muslim League were opposed to all forward planning as it meant planning for a unified India.

We then discussed the history of the Cripps offer and the Cabinet Mission. Nehru seemed 95% in agreement with the Mission's Statement and with Lord Wavell. I challenged him on the disagreements and reservations which he expressed, and he produced convincing arguments.

I asked him about Mr. Jinnah. He gave me a remarkable word-picture of Jinnah's character. He described him as one of the most extraordinary men in history. A financially successful though mediocre lawyer, Jinnah had found success late in life. He had not been politically successful until after the age of 60. Nehru explained Jinnah's creed, which he admitted had scored enormous success, as always to avoid taking any positive action which might split his followers; to refuse to hold meetings or to answer questions; never to make a progressive statement because it might lead to internal Muslim dissensions. These negative qualities were ones which had a direct appeal to the Muslims—therefore it was not to be hoped that logic would prevail.

I said that it was not a question of logic but of the time-limit. What if I were to say to Jinnah that he would be granted his Pakistan? Nehru agreed that it might be possible to frighten Jinnah into cooperation on the basis of the short length of time available.

1. New Delhi, 24 March 1947. Four accounts are printed here. The first is Mountbatten's record, the second is in his telegram to the Secretary of State dated 25 March 1947, and the last two are in the minutes of the Viceroy's first and second staff meetings held on 25 and 26 March 1947 respectively. These are published in *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 10 at pp 11-13, 19-20, 15-16 and 23 respectively. No record was maintained by Nehru of this interview.
2. The Department of Planning and Development was created in June 1944 for the coordination of postwar planning. It was abolished on 4 July 1946.

I next asked Nehru what he felt about the Coalition Government. He gave his opinion that it had been a most tragic act to force the Muslim League in, as they would anyhow have joined voluntarily before very long. We now, indeed, knew that Jinnah had actually decided that the Muslims would have had to enter the Government after a few more weeks.

Pandit Nehru agreed that he was not accepted by the Muslims as the leader of the Interim Government. The Muslim League did not intend that the Government should have its own powers and stand on its own feet. They deliberately intended that responsibility should continue to rest on the Viceroy under the Act of 1935. He understood the British object to transfer power by stages. But how was this to be achieved if the Muslim League did not recognise him?

We then spoke of the three resolutions passed by the Congress party on 8th March,<sup>3</sup> and of compensation for members of the Services.

I told Nehru, in the same way as I told Liaquat in my interview with him today, that I considered that I had an appalling responsibility to make up my mind what to recommend to His Majesty's Government. I drew attention to the remarkable position in which His Majesty's Government had placed me. I said that I intended to approach the problem in an atmosphere of stark realism. In connection with the time factor, I pointed out that it took two years to separate Burma I was less interested that India should be handed over on lines which might ultimately prove correct than that mechanism should be set up to avoid bloodshed after the departure of the British. I asked Nehru if he agreed that the army was the final guarantor of law and order, and that the morale and discipline of the army was of the highest importance. He agreed. I pointed out the problems which arose in trying to get the army nationalized within the time-limit.

Nehru said that he did not consider it possible, with the forces which were at work, that India could remain within the Commonwealth. But basically, he said, they did not want to break any threads, and he suggested "some form of common nationality" (I feel that they are beginning to see that they cannot go out of the Commonwealth; but they cannot afford to say that they will stay in; they are groping for a formula). Nehru gave a direct implication that they wanted to stay in; but a categorical statement that they intended to go out.

<sup>3</sup> The three resolutions passed by the Congress Working Committee on 8 March pertained to Attlee's declaration of 20 February 1947, the invitation to the Muslim League to meet representatives of the Congress and the division of the Punjab to avoid friction and violence between the two communities.

<sup>4</sup>I think that it was evidence of Nehru's fairness of mind that he said he would look for someone other than his previous nominee to be Trade Agent in Malaya,<sup>5</sup> since Lord Wavell had objected to him on the ground that he took part in an anti-British movement during the war.

## II

I had a preliminary talk with Nehru yesterday, 24th March, and explained H.M.G.'s decision. He was frankly astounded. His attitude was that the Indian Government wish members of the Secretary of State's Services to continue in employment after June 1948 and the new Government would be prepared to offer them continuous employment on the same conditions as heretofore. In particular he objected to the compensation terms which H.M.G. intended to pay,<sup>6</sup> which were in effect an encouragement to leave the service.

I pointed out that from the British Officers' point of view the transfer to service in the new Indian Government would in fact be the termination of a definite contract and might well be regarded by them as being in the nature of a gamble. If, however, British Officers had already been compensated I thought there was a far better chance that they would accept such a gamble and that they would be more likely to continue to serve with the new Indian Government. Nehru appreciated that H.M.G. must do what they liked in regard to British Officers but he thought that to offer similar terms to Indian Officers in the Secretary of State's Service was quite unnecessary and in any case the compensation proposed was too large. He was confident that this action would be bitterly resented. I

4. This paragraph is an addendum to Mountbatten's report.

5 S K. Chettur, ICS, had been appointed by the Government of India as their representative and liaison officer with Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia in October 1945. His designation was changed to that of the Representative of the Government of India in Malaya with effect from 1 April 1946. In fact, Chettur was not succeeded by J.A. Thivy till August 1947. See post, item 7

6. The India and Burma Committee of the British Cabinet decided on 13 March 1947 that the British Government should adhere to the same terms of compensation, without any differentiation between British and Indian members, which were brought to India in January 1947 by Henderson, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, and rejected by Patel on behalf of the Interim Government. It also decided that if the Government of India declined to bear the expenditure which was nearly 10 million, it should be made clear to them that such expenditure would have to be taken into account in the settlement of India's sterling balances

pointed out that in no circumstances would H.M.G. consider any discrimination between British and Indian Officers of the same Service.<sup>7</sup> I added that had H.M.G. proposed such discriminations I was sure that the Interim Government would have been the first to protest at such treatment.

### III

The Viceroy stated that during his conversation with Pandit Nehru the previous day, the latter had admitted the entity (unity) of the Punjab and confessed that he would regret partition. Pandit Nehru had suggested a temporary partition (primarily in order to avoid Section 93) into three areas—the first predominantly Muslim, the second predominantly Hindu and the third a mixed area. There might be separate Ministers for each area all under the one Governor. They might meet together and advise the Governor each on their own area matters. The arrangement would be strictly temporary, to last only as long as the British retained responsibility. Pandit Nehru had pointed out that Mr. Jinnah was much opposed to partition. The Viceroy said that he had asked Pandit Nehru to send him full proposals together with the opinion of the Constitutional Adviser. He added that he would take no further steps without consulting Mr. Jinnah.

### IV

The Viceroy said that, during the conversation he had had with Nehru two days previously, the latter had agreed that the Congress Party was likely eventually to break up on political lines. The present cooperation between different shades of political feeling within Congress was based on nationalistic aspirations, and a split on party rather than communal lines was probable after those aspirations had been achieved.

<sup>7</sup> In fact, Mountbatten, as Viceroy-designate, had suggested to Attlee on 7 March 1947 that "essentially this is a matter in which we should look after our own nationals and leave other nationals to be looked after by their own Governments."

## 2. To Mahatma Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
25.3.47

Dear Bapu,

Thank you for your letters. I am very sorry I have not written to you for a considerable time. I have been overwhelmed with work and anxiety and it is not easy to write briefly about complicated matters. This is one of the reasons why I have been wanting you to come here so that we might have long talks. This has become even more urgent now because of the new Viceroy's arrival and impending developments. He is anxious to meet you and has written to you. I do hope therefore that you will come soon and be prepared to stay here for a week or 10 days.

I feel strongly also that you should meet the delegates of the Asian Conference.<sup>2</sup> Most of them are very desirous of meeting you. They are a very representative lot coming from almost every country of Asia. This is a unique occasion, historic in the full sense of the word, and your absence would be unfortunate. The Conference lasts till 2nd April.

I would suggest your coming here on Saturday next the 29th March if that suits you. Or else on Sunday. Vallabhbhai is also anxious that you should come about this time.

I cannot write to you about events in the Punjab. It is a repetition of the same ghastly story and the same pattern. The newspapers have given fairly full accounts.<sup>3</sup>

About our proposal to divide Punjab, this follows naturally from our previous decisions.<sup>4</sup> These were negative previously but now a time for decision has come and mere passing of resolutions giving expression to

1. Pyarelal Papers.
2. Mahatma Gandhi wrote on 26 February 1947, "The last week of March next is at present for me a far cry. If God wills He will find a way for me to attend the Conference."
3. In a letter dated 20 March 1947, Mahatma Gandhi wished to know what Nehru could do about the Punjab tragedy. He did not believe the press reports and was amazed at how the country was adopting the same measures which were criticized during the British administration.
4. In the same letter Mahatma Gandhi wrote that in reply to a question put to him by a Muslim Leaguer he had said, "I could only give my own view which was against any partition based on communal grounds and the two-nation theory. Anything was possible by compulsion. But willing consent required an appeal to reason and heart. Compulsion or show of it had no place in voluntariness."

our views means little. I feel convinced, and so did most of the members of the Working Committee, that we must press for this immediate division so that reality might be brought into the picture. Indeed this is the only answer to Pakistan as demanded by Jinnah. I found people in Punjab agreeable to this proposal—except Muslims as a rule. For the present it means an administrative decision without any change in law.

I am writing in haste. You will forgive me But I do hope you will be able to come here soon to discuss all these matters.

Love.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

### 3. Mountbatten's Record of Interview with Nehru<sup>1</sup>

I began by giving him an account of my talk with Mr Gandhi, which the latter had agreed I should do. Pandit Nehru was not surprised to hear of the solution which had been suggested, since this was the same solution.<sup>2</sup> It was turned down then as being quite impracticable; and the policy of Direct Action by the Muslim League, and the bloodshed and bitterness in which it had resulted, made the solution even less realistic now than a year ago.

He said he was anxious for Mr. Gandhi to stay a few days longer in Delhi, as he had been away for four months and was rapidly getting out of touch with events at the Centre

1 New Delhi, 1 April 1947. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 10, pp 70-72.

2 At his interview with Mountbatten earlier in the day, Mahatma Gandhi had proposed that power should be transferred to an interim government, to be formed by Jinnah with full freedom to select the ministers. In the meantime the Viceroy should retain a firm charge at the Centre, till June 1948, in order to exercise a guiding hand during the early stages of self-government. In the event of Jinnah refusing this offer, Congress should be invited to form the Government. Mahatma Gandhi undertook to persuade the Congress to support this plan. He had suggested a similar solution to the Cabinet Mission on 3 April 1946.

We next discussed the partition of the Punjab and Ghazanfar Ali Khan's suggestion for fresh elections.<sup>3</sup> Pandit Nehru pointed out that the atmosphere engendered by fresh elections at this time could not fail to lead to a recrudescence of communal strife and bloodshed; and that at the end of the elections there was absolutely no guarantee that a Muslim League Government could be formed. And even if they had a small paper majority, the districts in which the Sikhs and Hindus predominated would now in no circumstances willingly accept the rule of an unrepresentative Government.

He linked the question of partition of Bengal with that of the Punjab. He had not yet had the opportunity of discussing with Mr. Gandhi his reasons for opposing the Congress resolution on partition;<sup>4</sup> but he realised that Mr. Gandhi was immensely keen on a unified India, at any immediate cost, for the benefit of the long-term future.

I told Pandit Nehru that I recognised that there were long-term and short-term considerations which must affect the decision I had to make, and that although the long-term ones should theoretically predominate, I hoped he would agree that I could not base my decision solely on them if the consequences were to be greatly increased chances of heavy bloodshed in the immediate future.<sup>5</sup> He said that no reasonable man would argue with these premises.

We discussed the position between Bengal and Assam, where the Governor of Bengal<sup>6</sup> had been unable to persuade his Government to take the necessary steps to stop the Muslim League activity across the borders of Bengal into Assam; and Pandit Nehru drew my attention to the fact that a Member of my Central Government, Mr. Nishtar, had recently been associating himself with the Direct Action policy of the Muslim League.

3. Ghazanfar Ali Khan demanded on 29 March 1947 that the Governor of the Punjab should either allow the leader of the Muslim League in the provincial assembly to form a ministry, or dissolve the legislature and hold fresh elections.
4. Nehru met Mahatma Gandhi for the first time in three months on the latter's arrival from Bihar on 31 March. Meanwhile Mahatma Gandhi had written to Nehru on 20 March, "I think I did not know the reason behind the Working Committee's resolution," and to Sardar Patel, "I cannot understand it."
5. Mahatma Gandhi, at his interview with Mountbatten, had urged him to have the courage to see the truth and act by it, even though the correct solution might mean grievous loss of life on an unprecedented scale on the departure of the British.
6. John Frederick Burrows

We next discussed the work which Mr. Gandhi is now carrying out in Bihar.<sup>7</sup> We both recognised the high purpose which impelled him to carry out this very difficult task in the hope of healing the sore spot in Bihar. But, as Pandit Nehru so aptly pointed out, Mr. Gandhi was going round with ointment trying to heal one sore spot after another on the body of India, instead of diagnosing the cause of this eruption of sores and participating in the treatment of the body as a whole. I entirely agreed, and said that it appeared that I would have to be the principal doctor in producing the treatment for the body as a whole, and that my prescription (which would in fact be my decision) would have to be very carefully made out if a cure was to be effected even temporarily.

Finally, he agreed that although an early decision would not necessarily affect the ultimate and basic causes of communal strife, a decision which was acceptable to most Indians and communities would undoubtedly remove the immediate cause of continued communal strife.

In conclusion he asked me if Lord Wavell had told me about the I.N.A. matter,<sup>8</sup> to which I replied he had put me fully in the picture and that I had also discussed it with the Commander-in-Chief, and with the Cabinet in London. He informed me that the matter was coming up in the Legislative Assembly the day after tomorrow, and that it would be impossible to have it postponed again since it had been postponed so often and for such long periods. The motion<sup>9</sup> was bound to be carried and thereafter the Government would be faced with the dilemma that my predecessor had exercised his veto and overruled the Cabinet, and had since departed. He therefore had to take my directions in the matter, much as he regretted embarrassing me so early in my term of office.

- 7 Interrupting his mission in Noakhali and Tipperah, Mahatma Gandhi toured Bihar from 5 March till the end of April, preaching communal harmony and appealing to the Hindus to actively help in the rehabilitation of the Muslim evacuees During this period he also visited Delhi, from 31 March to 12 April, at the invitation of Mountbatten to discuss issues connected with the transfer of power.
- 8. The move to release the Indian National Army prisoners, facing charges of brutality and treason, was one issue on which all Members of the Interim Government were united However, Wavell vetoed the measure on the eve of his departure.
- 9 Abdul Ghani Khan's resolution recommending the immediate release of the I.N.A. prisoners came up for discussion in the Central Legislative Assembly on 3 April 1947. It was withdrawn on Nehru's suggestion on behalf of the Government that all I.N.A cases should be referred to the available judges of the Federal Court for a review of the findings and modification of sentences See *post*, section 8, item 5



RECEIVING LORD MOUNTBATTEN ON HIS ARRIVAL, DEI HI AIRPORT, 22 MARCH 1947



ADDRESSING A MEETING AT RLD CROSS BHAVAN, NEW DELHI,  
MARCH 1947

His view appeared to be most reasonable, but he pointed out that a popular Government could not remain in office in the face of complete disregard of, or opposition to, the expression of popular will in the Legislative Assembly.

He also saw that my position would be irretrievably damaged with one side or the other according to any complete and absolute decision I might take; that is to say, if I supported Lord Wavell's veto, I should damage my position with all Indian politicians at the beginning of the negotiations, since I should be commencing my period of office with the unconstitutional act of reverting to the use of the veto. On the other hand, if I reversed Lord Wavell's veto, after it had been supported by the British Cabinet, immediately on his departure, and if as a consequence the Commander-in-Chief resigned (with the risk of many other resignations to follow in his train), I should have precipitated a crisis which could not fail to jeopardise my position in the United Kingdom where for the sake of India I obviously required at this time the strongest support from H.M.G.

Pandit Nehru and I agreed that we were both placed in an impossible position by this resolution, and that some form of workable compromise must be found.

I suggested that we should declare an amnesty for political offences, since all the I.N.A. prisoners were in on both the political charge of waging war against the King and the criminal charge of brutality. Would it not satisfy the Legislative Assembly if an amnesty on the political offence caused an immediate review by the High Court of the sentences and reduced them proportionately?

Pandit Nehru felt that he had a better compromise to offer, in the suggestion that the Commander-in-Chief should be stated to have himself undertaken that the sentences should be reviewed on a certain date, either by himself or by the High Court, with a view to a reduction which would result in the immediate release of the least serious offenders, whilst leaving the others still in prison.

I refused to give any opinion except in the presence of the Commander-in-Chief, and arranged for him and his Defence Member, and both of us to meet together for a discussion after the Cabinet meeting to-morrow.

#### 4. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
April 5, 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

I am enclosing a paper which might interest you.<sup>2</sup> This was handed to me this evening. I had seen something similar to this previously but this is a better specimen. I should have liked to show this to my colleague, Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, but as I am not likely to see him during the week-end I thought it better to send it on to you. I am sure that Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan has nothing to do with this although his name has been used.

I have given your message to Mr. Gandhi.<sup>3</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.

2. The enclosure was a so-called Rs. 1,000 note on the "Reserve Bank of Pakistan".

3. This was in fact Ismay's note on Mahatma Gandhi's scheme for an Interim Government pending transfer of power.

#### 5. Account of Mountbatten's Interview with Nehru<sup>1</sup>

The Viceroy saw Pandit Nehru for a few minutes after lunch and gave him a copy of the outline scheme<sup>2</sup> which I had prepared the evening before, after my talk with Mr. Gandhi.

1. This note was recorded by Ismay, who was also present at the interview held at New Delhi on 5 April 1947. Lord Mountbatten Papers, Broadlands Archives Trust, Broadlands, Romsey, Hampshire.
2. It incorporated the main features of Mahatma Gandhi's plan that Jinnah should be given the option of forming a Cabinet with full freedom to select the members. The Congress would cooperate freely provided the measures brought forward by this Cabinet were in the interests of India as a whole, Mountbatten in his personal capacity being the sole judge of the sincerity of the measures. Jinnah should ensure that the parties represented in the Cabinet would do their utmost to preserve peace throughout the country, and that there would be no private armies, like the National Guards. If Jinnah rejected this offer, the same offer was to be made *mutatis mutandis* to the Congress

Pandit Nehru did not discuss the scheme in any detail, but certainly did not give the impression of being enamoured of it. He doubted whether Mr. Jinnah would be prepared to enter the Government on any terms.

I suggested that if Mr. Jinnah could be induced to join with the Congress leaders in a joint declaration denouncing the use of violence, the disorders in the Punjab and the N.W.F.P. might at least be decreased.

Pandit Nehru agreed and added that Congress themselves had, of course, many times issued announcements denouncing the use of force.

## 6. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
8 April 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

The enclosed letter<sup>2</sup> was handed to me some days ago with the request that I should forward it to you. I am sorry that I overlooked it.

2. A similar letter was sent to me by the Bengal members of the Central Legislature. I understand that it was sent to you directly also.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

<sup>1</sup> JN Collection.

<sup>2</sup> In a letter dated 2 April 1947, some members of the Central Legislative Assembly and the Council of State from the Punjab stated that "recent tragic happenings in North-Western Punjab have very rudely shaken the confidence of the Hindu and the Sikh minorities in the belief that there will be any fair deal for them at the hands of the Muslims in future," and urged that effective steps be taken forthwith to partition the Punjab into two provinces.

## 7. Mountbatten's Record of Interview with Nehru<sup>1</sup>

Lord Ismay showed him his correspondence with Mr. Gandhi and explained the present position about the Gandhi plan.<sup>2</sup> I asked Pandit Nehru to convey to Mr. Gandhi a message explaining that I could not yet say anything further about the plan since I was still busy getting background information.

We then discussed with Pandit Nehru what his solution would be for the transfer of power. He thought that it would not be right to impose any form of constitutional conditions on any community that had a majority in any specific area. Thus, if we were to demit province by province, he felt they should have the right to decide whether to join a Hindustan Group, a Pakistan Group, or possibly even remain completely independent. He added that of course before such a thing were done the Punjab and Bengal would have to be split into separate provinces.

In reply to a question about how to obtain the real views of the people of the N.W.F.P. on which Group they wished to join he suggested that a fresh election should be held after a statement had been made.

The whole thing revolved round having a strong Centre, certainly to begin with, and for that reason Pandit Nehru would favour making a statement soon and transferring power to provinces while there was still time for me to be in charge at the Centre to help in the early stages of negotiations at the Centre.

He agreed that a formula would have to be found which would prevent the Congress Party from being able to impose their will upon the army

1 Held at New Delhi on 8 April 1947 *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 10, pp 154-155

2 On 5 April 1947 Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Ismay that the "outline" contained merely the points he had hurriedly dictated and said that points 7 and 8 should read as follows.

"Within the framework hereof Mr. Jinnah will be perfectly free to present for acceptance a scheme of Pakistan, even before the transfer of power, provided, however, that he is successful in his appeal to reason and not to the force of arms which he abjures for all time for this purpose. Thus, there will be no compulsion in this matter over a Province or part thereof."

"In the Assembly the Congress has a decisive majority. But the Congress shall never use that majority against the League policy simply because of its identification with the League but will give its hearty support to every measure brought forward by the League Government, provided that it is in the interest of the whole of India. Whether it is in such interest or not shall be decided by Lord Mountbatten as man and not in his representative capacity."

by majority vote, if the army were kept as a single Service under the Centre.

We also discussed the question of the States, and came to the provisional conclusion that Pakistan should be encouraged to set up their own Constituent Assembly, and the States should choose into which Constituent Assembly they would come.

After Lord Ismay left, we discussed the question of the Appointments Committee. I read to him the letter<sup>3</sup> dated 7 April from Liaquat Ali Khan, and we agreed on the form of answer<sup>4</sup> which I gave to Mr. Abell, who joined the meeting for a short period.

In particular, Pandit Nehru would like me to find out from the Governor-General and Governor in Malaya (Mr. Malcolm MacDonald<sup>5</sup> and Sir Edward Gent<sup>6</sup>) whether the appointment of Mr. J. Thivy to be the Agent of the Government of India in Malaya would be acceptable to them. I gather he is quite popular out there and knows a lot about labour. But in view of the fact that he was closely associated with the Indian Independence League, there might be some local objections which would have to be cleared.

He also discussed the appointment in Ceylon, and said he would be putting up a new proposal about this shortly.

3. In his letter of 7 April 1947, Liaquat Ali expressed satisfaction with the existing procedure of making appointments on the recommendation of the Member in charge of the concerned Department, and rejected the proposal for a committee consisting of himself, Nehru or Patel, and Matthai for this purpose, as therein all appointments were "bound to be discussed in the context of differences between the Congress and the Muslim League .. with the result that there would always be two votes against one"
4. Mountbatten replied that "it would be better from every point of view to have important appointments considered by a Committee of the Cabinet Even from the Party angle I do not see that the Muslim League gains by allowing all external appointments to be settled by the Hon Member, External Affairs, in consultation with me" He hoped that the committee would "work by the usual process of agreement and compromise", while any dispute could be taken to the whole Cabinet
5. Malcolm John MacDonald (1901-1981), son of Ramsay MacDonald, Member of Parliament, 1929-45, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 1935-38 and 1938-39, Secretary of State for Colonies, 1935 and 1938-40, Minister of Health, 1940-41; British High Commissioner in Canada, 1941-46; Governor-General of Malaya, Singapore and British Borneo, 1946-48; British Commissioner-General in South-East Asia, 1948-55, British High Commissioner in India, 1955-60; Governor-General of Kenya, 1963-64; British High Commissioner in Kenya, 1964-65.
- 6 (1895-1948); Assistant Under-Secretary of State, 1942-46, Governor and Commander-in-Chief, Malayan Union, 1946-48.

Nehru thought that the only way the Gandhi plan could be made use of was by offering the premiership of the Interim Government to Jinnah, with the object of strengthening the central authority until the handing over of power in June 1948.

I asked Pandit Nehru whether the Congress High Command would be prepared to issue an appeal for the cessation of all hostilities or provocative acts, in fact for a truce until I had given my decision. He said that he was sure there would be no difficulty to get them to agree to this. I said I would mention the matter also to Mr. Jinnah.

## 8. Mountbatten's Record of Interview with Nehru<sup>1</sup>

I began by giving him an account of my negotiations up to date with Mr. Jinnah.<sup>2</sup> Pandit Nehru did not express any surprise, and said he thought that they had gone pretty well exactly as he feared they would.

I pointed out to Pandit Nehru I had been able to tell Mr. Jinnah in all honesty that I had not discussed any solution with any member of the Congress other than Mr. Gandhi, and that his was a plan that I had said I would not consider unless it was clear that influential members of Congress were prepared to back it.

Pandit Nehru was obviously pleased to find that my independent and impartial conclusions were very much on the same lines as he would like to have seen them adopted, namely, a unified India with a strong Centre.

1. Held at New Delhi on 11 April 1947. Extracts. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 10, pp. 199-200.
2. During discussions with Mountbatten, from 5 to 10 April 1947, Jinnah denied that the Muslim League had joined the Interim Government on the understanding that it would enter the Constituent Assembly. It was futile to return to the Cabinet Mission plan as the Congress had not intended to work it. He rejected any compromise solution and demanded an early "surgical operation" forming five existing provinces into Pakistan, and a splitting of the defence forces. He protested strongly when Mountbatten stated that by the same logic Bengal and the Punjab would have to be partitioned too, and threatened that in that case he would demand the partition of Assam.

At this stage Sir Eric Mieville came in with the draft of the joint truce message,<sup>3</sup> which had been submitted to Mr. Jinnah. Pandit Nehru expressed great surprise that Mr. Jinnah was prepared to sign a statement renouncing the use of force for political purposes; but he agreed that it would be an excellent thing if he would do so.

Sir Eric said that Mr. Jinnah wanted Mr. Gandhi to be the co-signatory and not Mr. Kripalani. He had further warned Sir Eric that Mr. Gandhi had refused to sign a document in similar circumstances after the Bengal massacres.<sup>4</sup> Pandit Nehru pointed out that this was not exactly true and he thought that it might be possible to get Mr. Gandhi to sign.

At this stage a letter was brought in from Mr. Gandhi saying that he had been unable to get leading members of Congress to support his plan, and proposed to leave for Patna on the next day. I sent a message asking him to come and see me at 11.45 on the following morning to discuss the statement and report progress.

Pandit Nehru undertook to talk the matter over with Mr. Gandhi before I saw him.

Meanwhile I warned Pandit Nehru that Mr. Jinnah was going to counter with a request for the partition of Assam. Pandit Nehru said that this was a perfectly reasonable request and could easily be agreed to.

3. A joint appeal signed by Mahatma Gandhi and Jinnah was issued on 15 April 1947. It denounced "for all time the use of force to achieve political ends" and called upon all the communities to refrain from acts of violence and disorder
4. According to Wavell, Mahatma Gandhi had refused in October 1946 to sign a plea for communal peace on the ground that "he was not even a member of the Congress and Jinnah would have nothing to do with anything signed by Gandhi."

## 9. The Future of India<sup>1</sup>

The time has now come when we should decide one way or the other. The urgency of the time requires that responsible persons of various political parties should sit round a table and make a final decision.

1. Speech at the Jallianwala Bagh Day meeting, New Delhi, 13 April 1947.  
From *The Hindustan Times*, 14 April 1947.

About forty days ago the Congress Working Committee invited the Muslim League to have discussions with them but there was no response from the League and so far there has been no meeting. This is very strange. I do not know whether any meeting will take place at all.

As my stay in Delhi has become rather permanent for the last eight or nine months, I have had very little opportunity of meeting people in public meetings and I have not been even able to go to my province.

Instead of things getting easier, I find knotty problems arising at every step. So many revolutions have taken place in different parts of the world and they have had their repercussions on India as well. India's freedom is definitely going to be achieved but there will be political upheavals, but such troubles should not deter us from attaining our cherished goal.

The Jallianwala Bagh massacre was an epoch-making incident in the history of India which kindled in us a burning desire to think seriously about our own affairs. After 1919 the Gandhian era started. The people of India, including kisans, *zamindars*, labourers and workers, whole-heartedly participated in the activities of the national movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The Congress activities began about 65 years ago, but the turning-point came only after 1919.

So far as the future is concerned, it is almost definite that British imperialism in India will come to an end soon. The statement of Mr. Attlee and the facts and events are before us. The British Government have made a statement to the effect that they will quit India by June 1948. In this connection Mr. Attlee particularly mentioned about the Indian Princes who have started making preparations to face the situation and have formed a number of committees and started negotiations. As a matter of fact, they ought to have consulted the representatives of the people of the States, but, instead, they have started consulting lawyers and expert constitutionalists for determining their position in the new set-up which is going to be shaped in accordance with the statement of Mr. Attlee.

There is no question of honesty or integrity of purpose in these historic statements made by the British Prime Minister, but there are facts which we have to face. Whatever has been happening in our country since August 1946 makes us feel sad, shameful and humiliated before the eyes of the world. Since Mr. Attlee's statement dreadful things have been happening in India, and so long as the British Government continues to remain in India, those people who do not want that the British Government should go will continue to create such troubles.

I would like to draw your attention to the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan. There are only two ways to resolve this—either through

mutual discussions and negotiations or through a fight. If there had been no British Government in India such internal feuds would have easily come to an end. It is now going away but there are difficulties before us. It is evident that we should settle our differences by methods which may be acceptable to all of us.

I want that India which will soon be free should get an opportunity to become a strong and powerful country and march forward. I desire that I should get an opportunity to build a new India of my conception. I want that those who stand as an obstacle in our way should go their own way. I wish that at least 80 or 90 per cent of India should move forward according to the map of India which I have in my mind.

I want that in future India all Indians should get perfect freedom. There cannot be the rule of any religious community. There can be neither Hindu raj nor Muslim raj. There can be only the rule of Indians. The days of religious rule ended long ago.

The tragedies perpetrated in Bengal, Bihar, the Punjab, Bombay and other places have filled our thoughts with horror and the English people laugh at us. All such happenings lead us to no results, and no political motive will be served by such misdeeds and brutal methods, and Pakistan cannot be achieved by such manoeuvrings.

I want to see a solid and united India and do not want to finish the remaining portion of my life in such domestic petty squabbles and disputes. If some people do not want to follow our ways, they can go ahead with their plans and we shall follow our own. I have no doubt that no part of India can afford to be out of the Union of India.

In Delhi a very big conference of Asian countries<sup>2</sup> was held. India, which is not yet independent and despite all such drawbacks, has a unique position and has become the focus of all the Asian countries. Every country wants to develop closer and friendly relations with India and in some countries we have already established our embassies and you will hear every day that some ambassadors are being appointed in different countries on behalf of India. Other countries are equally eager to establish friendly relations with India despite all such internal disputes and feuds as are going on these days. India is going to become one of the biggest countries of the world and is advancing every day in that direction.

If internal disputes had not occurred, India would have acquired by this time the highest pinnacle of glory. Despite all such impediments, our country is going ahead with its future plans of progress. It is time for us to think seriously where we are being led to and what

2. See post, section 11 (III)

is happening to us. The most vital question before us today is that if we want to achieve for India anything all of us must be united. No political objective can be gained by violence. If unity is not possible, we shall have to concentrate our efforts in some parts of the country where we can develop things in an ideal form. If people of any part of India do not want to live together under one Union, it does not mean that they should drag away those who are unwilling to go with them.

As regards the provinces where the Muslim League is in a majority, as in Sind, a statement has been issued by the Premier of Sind<sup>3</sup> that by June 1948 it will be an independent unit. The same thing probably applies to Bengal.<sup>4</sup> But the people of Bengal need help in money and material since it has been an unfortunate province being visited by famine and devastations. But if it is segregated from the Union, the question of rendering any help will not arise. Similarly, in the Punjab, if partition is made, it will not be a happy place. But under the existing circumstances, Bengal and the Punjab may be partitioned according to the Congress resolution, although the Congress is against partition.<sup>5</sup> It is very likely that they may unite again when they are faced with hard realities and when wiser counsels will prevail.

Since the new Viceroy has been busy meeting the leaders of various parties, I do not know what will be the outcome of such negotiations. Since we are placed in such a situation, we cannot leave things undecided. The time for passing resolutions has gone and we have to arrive at concrete decisions. Mr. Attlee's statement contains certain points which we do not like and some of them are ambiguous, but we are satisfied with that part of it which refers to the announcement of quitting India.

We requested the Muslim League to send their representatives for a round-table conference, but so far there has been no response. Supposing nothing comes out of the negotiations by the end of June 1948, and the British leave India, the immediate problem with which we shall be faced will be to settle our differences. Under the present circumstances,

3. Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah

4. The Hindu members of the Central Assembly from Bengal held a meeting on 8 March 1947 and decided that the only solution to the communal problem was partition of the province

5. The minority problem was acutest in Punjab and Bengal because the majority and minority communities were evenly balanced. The Congress Working Committee resolved on 8 March 1947, "These tragic events have demonstrated that there can be no settlement of the problem in the Punjab by violence and coercion, and that no arrangement based on coercion can last.

...This would necessitate a division of the Punjab into two provinces, so that the predominantly Muslim part may be separated from the predominantly non-Muslim part."

the leaders should negotiate and find out solutions for these problems.

A great responsibility lies on our heads and we have to face the situation, chalk out our constructive programme and also work it out. We have to carry out our plans undeterred in view of our relations which we are developing with other countries and who are looking towards us for our leadership.

We should not be depressed by the present situation and should have courage enough to face all hard realities I don't know what decisions are going to be arrived at within the coming two or three months but something must be decided. We have to equip ourselves mentally and physically and have to keep our aspirations high before us

#### 10. To H.N. Brailsford<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
15 April 1947

My dear Brailsford,

Thank you for your letter of the 28th March. It is a pleasure to hear from you and to have your good wishes.

I have given a great deal of thought to your proposal.<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact I have spoken more or less in the terms suggested on several occasions. I am not clear in my mind as to what a letter would do. Just at present when the Viceroy is carrying on various talks, a letter would be rather inappropriate and would be misunderstood by most people.

You must know that the Congress has offered to agree willingly to some kind of Pakistan provided this includes only the areas with a Muslim majority. That means a division of the Punjab and Bengal. This division seems to have become inevitable after recent happenings I have little doubt in my mind that a temporary division of this type will not last.

In reality a more important question now is that of the Indian States The old Political Department is functioning as mischievously as ever and trying to make India a thing of shreds and patches with every little

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Brailsford suggested that Nehru should address an open letter to Jinnah, appealing to the League to preserve the unity of India and assuring the Muslims that "their rights as equal citizens and the exponents of a great Asian culture shall be respected" The main argument of the letter should be that "for you (Nehru) and for Congress, Muslims and Muslim culture are a great and indispensable part of Indian life, and that India cannot be India without them"

State an independent entity. This will not happen, of course, but it will lead to a great deal of trouble.

With all good wishes to you and your wife.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 11. Minutes of the Third Miscellaneous Meeting of the Viceroy<sup>1</sup>

Pandit Nehru said that the Advisory Committee referred to was dealing with widely different subjects and there was no question of the Committee going to the N.W.F.P. at present as it was obviously undesirable in the present state of affairs.<sup>2</sup>...

Sir Olaf Caroe said that he had considered recently whether it would be possible to hold elections in the N.W.F.P. at an early date. He was of the opinion that they could be held under the control of the present Government with the idea of giving it a fresh mandate or of finding an alternative Government. The Viceroy said that elections could not take place immediately, but would have to wait until after he had made his recommendations to H.M.G.

Pandit Nehru agreed that the elections would probably cause some disturbances if they were held now, but it was desirable to obtain the views of the people before the final turn-over of power was effected. The Viceroy thought that it might be helpful if the Governor issued a statement of such sort on his return to the province. Sir Olaf Caroe agreed but thought it would be unnecessary to mention when the elections would take place or to say anything about the mechanics of carrying out the elections; he thought that the mere fact of announcing that elections would take place would be sufficient to ease the tension.

1 New Delhi, 16 April 1947 Extracts The meeting was attended, among others, by Mountbatten, Nehru, Liaquat Ali and Caroe *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 10, pp 286-292.

2 Caroe had stated that the Afridis "would not have the Advisory Committee of the Constituent Assembly visiting them until Congress and the Muslim League had considered their differences and the Committee was fully representative of an united India "

Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan thought that when elections were held, the authority in power at the time must be completely neutral. He thought it most undesirable that there should be one single party in power at the time of the elections. Possibly the Governor, who of course was completely impartial, could have the responsibility.

Pandit Nehru thought that impartial elections could be conducted by the permanent officials rather than by the Governor. He said that the proposal by Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan meant in fact that the Government should be dismissed and that the Governor should take over control under Section 93. He thought that this was not helpful, would not result in impartial elections and would undoubtedly be bitterly resented....

The Viceroy asked whether the leaders present would be in agreement with him if the Governor was authorised to say on his return that, after the recommendation had been made to H.M.G. about the transfer of power and before the transfer of power had been effected, elections would be held in the N.W.F.P....

Pandit Nehru said that he did not think, in view of the present situation in the N.W.F.P., that it should be announced at the present time that elections would be held. It would appear if such an announcement were made that the Provincial Government's hand had been forced by the agitations that were taking place....

The Viceroy suggested that the Pir of Manki<sup>3</sup> might be released if it was agreed that a statement of the type which they had been discussing was issued. Pandit Nehru, however, thought this would have a bad effect and that he should not be released until the Opposition movement which he controlled had entirely ceased their activities.

Sir Olaf Caroe pointed out that the arrest of the Pir of Manki had had a great effect among the tribes who had been holding jirgas and calling for his release. In fact, there was remarkable tribal unity being shown against the Government in this respect. He did not think that the Pir of Manki had been stirring up trouble or violence although since his arrest his followers had undoubtedly been doing so, but this was because he was not there to guide them. Pandit Nehru did not entirely agree with this and said that they had had evidence that the Pir of Manki had advocated methods other than peaceful ones, and had been inciting his followers to violence...

Pandit Nehru said that he was sure that people who had come to see him from the N.W.F.P. were arrested on their return. The Governor

3. Pir Mohammad Aminul Hasanat of Manki Sharif (1923-1960) was a prominent Frontier leader responsible for the success of the Muslim League in the Frontier.

expressed disbelief of this and said it would be unwise to listen to stories of this type. Pandit Nehru agreed that it was impossible to rely entirely on telegrams and letters, but they did give an indication of feeling in the province.<sup>4</sup>...

The Viceroy read out a further telegram No. 120-CB of 16th April which had just been received about the situation in D.I.K. He said that he thought that a statement on the lines proposed was essential. Pandit Nehru thought that any statement about fresh elections which was issued now would obviously be linked with the disturbances at D.I.K. and would be interpreted as a success for the Opposition movement. The Viceroy said that he quite<sup>1</sup>saw Pandit Nehru's point, but thought that the statement might be linked with the recent Governors' Conference and with his assumption of the Viceroyalty three weeks ago. It might be possible to lay the emphasis on these two points and to take care not to associate the statement with the present situation ..

4 At the start of the meeting Mountbatten had read out a telegram received from the N.W.F.P. which had reported rioting, looting and arson in Dera Ismail Khan.

## 12. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
17 April 1947

My dear Lord Mountbatten,  
In the hope of meeting Dr. Khan Sahib I have postponed my departure for Gwalior and I am now leaving at 1 p.m. tomorrow, 18th April.<sup>2</sup> I am afraid it is not possible to postpone it still further without upsetting numerous rather important engagements and disappointing a large number of people. I had hoped that Dr. Khan Sahib would arrive this evening; but I am told that some engine trouble has delayed his departure from Peshawar. He is now due tomorrow some time in the morning. I hope I shall meet him, but I am not sure

2. Because of all this uncertainty I am writing this letter to you so that I might let you know how I feel about this question which we have discussed at length. I have given a great deal of thought to it since last night. I did so not only because it was an important matter in itself but also because of its significance. Indeed my mind has been so full of this

1 *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 10, pp. 304-307

2. The annual session of the All India States People's Conference met at Gwalior from 18 to 20 April 1947.

subject that I have not been able to do anything else effectively. I feel I must write to you and let you know what my reactions are after this full consideration. I might add that I have consulted four of my colleagues also.

3. I think I realise fully how anxious you are to stop the rioting and bloodshed that are going on in various parts of India; also your particular anxiety to prevent worse developments in the Frontier areas. May I say that I agree with you entirely in both these matters? I hate violence more especially of the brutal and vulgar type that we have seen lately in India and I would go very far indeed to stop it. The question is how best this can be done. We have seen in the past steps being taken, ostensibly with a good object, but leading to wrong results and greater trouble. My fear has been that the proposal made last night might,<sup>3</sup> instead of leading to peace, result in an encouragement to violence. The more I thought of it the more this conviction has grown and my colleagues share this conviction.

4. It is a little difficult to isolate any one question or part of the country from another. Obviously what is happening is part of a pattern and every single thing that takes place produces its reactions elsewhere. At the present moment the principal affected areas are Bengal, Punjab, the Assam frontier, and the North-West Frontier Province. From all accounts the situation in the first three of these places, though under control, is tense and explosive. Anything that happens in the Frontier will immediately produce its effect in the other three regions.

5. It does little good to blame others for the misdeeds of large numbers of people of all groups and communities. Nevertheless I think it is perfectly true to say that the violence and brutality that we have seen in India during the last eight months are the resultants of the deliberate policy of the Muslim League called "Direct Action". That violence has bred violence in others also. Essentially the tactics of the Muslim League have been remarkably similar to those of the Nazis in their early days with their Brown Shirts and Black Shirts.<sup>4</sup> In so far as a belief grows

3. See the preceding item

4. In the years before coming to power, the Brown Shirts started all over Germany a reign of terror and savage brutality. The Brown Shirts were instrumental in bringing Hitler to power. Thereafter Hitler disbanded the Brown Shirts and organised the Black Shirts of his own army, who were young men pledged to unquestioning obedience. The policy of the Muslim League had much resemblance to the repressive policy of the Nazis.

that these tactics succeed, the method is pursued with greater vigour. In the Punjab they succeeded in bringing about the fall of the Ministry and immediately after horrible consequences followed.<sup>5</sup> That kind of thing may very well be repeated in the Frontier on a worse scale. It seems to me essential that it should be demonstrated beyond doubt that these methods cannot be allowed to succeed. A policy of appeasement results in encouragement of these methods and in inflaming people who are opposed to these methods and suffer from them. As soon as they think that Government is partial, they despair and take the law into their own hands.

6. It is no good merely following a negative policy of repression. But a positive policy, whatever it may be, should in no way be linked up to what appears to be a surrender to violent methods. That positive policy must be to create a feeling that no group will be dominated over by another. It was with this object in view that we suggested divisions of the Punjab and of Bengal, much as we dislike them.

7. In the Frontier Province a proposal of the Governor for fresh elections has in effect been a proposal of the Muslim League and has been stoutly resisted by the present Ministry who were elected only a year ago and have a substantial majority in the Legislature.<sup>6</sup> That, of course, is not enough reason to avoid elections and I entirely agree with you that power should be transferred after making sure that the recipients re-

5 In the 1946 general elections, the Muslim League became the largest single party in the Punjab Assembly. The Muslim League had to join with some other party to form a ministry. But they failed in that attempt. A coalition ministry was formed with the Congress, Akali and Unionist parties under the leadership of Malik Khizr Hayat Khan, much against the desire of the Muslim League to establish an "undiluted Muslim Rule" over the Punjab. Violent incidents became the order of the day. Finding himself helpless against the mounting onslaughts of the League, Malik Khizr Hayat Khan tendered his resignation on 2 March without consulting his non-Muslim colleagues. The Governor took over the administration when attempts to form an alternative ministry failed. The riots which punctuated these events began to spread all over the province, making partition the only solution to the disturbances.

6 The Muslim League held that the non-League ministry came to power in the province through frauds at elections and bureaucratic high-handedness. In tune with this argument Olaf Caroe, the Governor, suggested the dismissal of the ministry and the introduction of section 93 rule in the province pending restoration of peace and holding of general elections. But it was pointed out to him that the Frontier Government was established by the consent of the majority and that so long as it enjoyed the confidence of the majority it could not be dismissed.

present the majority of the people in that area. For this purpose, if an election is necessary, it should take place. But to announce now that a general election will be held would undoubtedly be looked upon as a triumph for the policy pursued by the Muslim League and as an open rebuff to the present Ministry. In the Frontier it might well result in the resignation of the Ministry. This would create a difficult situation for us in the Centre and, I think, would certainly lead to a revival of the violent agitation in the Punjab and the Assam border. It would also make large numbers of people in Eastern Punjab feel that the Muslim League is being supported and encouraged. Exactly what the consequences might be I do not know. But I am sure they would be far reaching. In attempting to solve one problem we might well have to face a number of graver problems and even that one problem may not be solved at all.

8. I know the Frontier sufficiently to realise the dangers inherent in the situation. All my instinct tells me that those dangers will increase if anything is done which makes people believe that Government are siding with the Muslim League in that province. Already there is, rightly or wrongly, an amazing lack of faith in the *bona fides* of the Governor and many other officials.<sup>7</sup> If this new step is taken and the Governor is the mouthpiece of the proposal, the conviction would grow that there is no hope in any constitutional activity and people would cease to think in terms of elections and prepare for other methods.

9. I have little doubt that however the statement may be phrased it would be interpreted as an affront to and a letting down of the present Ministry and an encouragement to the Muslim League. The Congress organisation and all those who sympathise with it would view it as such, as well as vast numbers of people who have no particular political affiliations. It would thus be a blow to the various constitutional processes that are going on and might even powerfully affect the reception to such proposals as you may make in the course of the next few weeks. Large numbers of people will feel as if they were disillusioned and cease to take interest in these proposals. They would revert to a mentality of distrust and hostility which is always there somewhere at the back of their minds.

7. The motive behind the proposal for fresh elections was considered to be the installation of the Muslim League in the Government. The Muslim League agitation in the Frontier Province had the support of the Governor. In a press interview Abdul Ghaffar Khan disclosed that the Governor relied on parole the Muslim League leaders who were in jail without consulting the ministers.

SELECTED WORKS OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

10. I am writing to you frankly because I think I owe it to you and myself to do so Dr. Khan Sahib will, of course, be able to tell you his own reactions and his own appraisement of the situation in the Frontier. He is, as I am sure you will find, a frank, straight-forward man of exceeding courage He is popular even with his opponents because of these qualities. His judgment is not always right but his instincts are very sound. In his virtues and his failings he is the best type of Pathan. He is very unlike his brother whom you have met, though he is very closely attached to him.

11. If I may say so, no statement of the kind suggested, that is with any reference to general elections, should be made at this stage. The very first thing that should be done is for the appeal made by Mr. Gandhi and Mr Jinnah to be backed up by those in the Frontier and for the Muslim League to cry halt to their methods It would naturally follow that most of the people in prison should be released. At present the happenings at D I. Khan and other places are too near to be dissociated with any new proposal I appreciate what you said that a proposal might naturally follow the Governors' conference <sup>8</sup> But I do not think this has very much importance in the public mind and there will be far better opportunities I hope in the near future. No proposal should be such as to make people think that it is a surrender to the violent methods and encouragement of the Muslim League Fortunately you are looked upon as impartial in this matter I do not wish people to think otherwise, though I am quite sure that they would be wrong in thinking so.

12. I am myself inclined to think, though this is largely conjecture, that the situation in the Frontier Province will not deteriorate now. The only chance of its deteriorating is the belief that further violence will bring dividends. Such a belief has to be scotched and there will be a rapid improvement. Later will be the time for making any announcement, and whatever the announcement may be, it should come from Dr. Khan Sahib. This may take any appropriate form.

13. Please forgive me for this long letter. About the Frontier Dr. Khan Sahib will be able to give you a better picture than I can; but about rea-

8. The two-day conference with the Viceroy held on 15 and 16 April discussed the new situation created by the British Government's statement of February 20. Their discussion mainly focused on the problems of administration in the context of political controversies relating to the question of devolution

ctions in other places I am in a somewhat better position to know than he is. I only hope that, though the situation is full of urgency, nothing may be done in a hurry which might have evil results.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 13. Minutes of the Sixth Miscellaneous Meeting of the Viceroy<sup>1</sup>

During the discussion<sup>2</sup> which followed, Pandit Nehru made the following points:—

- (a) He generally agreed with the procedure envisaged;<sup>3</sup>
- (b) he pointed out that the questions to be asked of the voters in the Punjab and Bengal (i.e. first whether they wished the provinces to be partitioned; and, secondly, whether they wished the whole or parts of the provinces to remain independent, to adhere to Hindustan, or to adhere to Pakistan) were most closely interconnected and would require to be most carefully phrased;
- (c) the 1941 census figures were not very accurate in parts of India, especially parts of Bengal, where there were almost equal numbers of Muslims and non-Muslims.<sup>4</sup> An investigation by the Statistical Survey subsequent to the census had divulged enormous divergencies. Separate electorates gave a great temptation to "cook" numbers, particularly of women in purdah;

1. Held at New Delhi on 22 April 1947. Extracts *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 10, pp 363-365
2. The discussion was initiated by Mountbatten, who said he intended to make one more attempt to persuade both the parties to accept the Cabinet Mission's plan. He also said that the alternative to the acceptance of that plan (or another similar plan for an united India) would be the partition of India. But a decision to divide the country could not be taken by the British. It would be better for the provinces to make their own choice.
3. Details of the procedure envisaged for ascertaining the desires of the provinces were provided by Abell at the meeting.
4. The population figures according to the census of 1941 in Bengal were. Muslims, 33,005,434 and non-Muslims, 27,301,091.

- (d) there was no doubt that, until recently, there had been a very strong sense of union in Bengal—but this had lately been overcome among non-Muslims. Any decision to make Bengal an independent unit would mean in the eyes of the majority of non-Muslims a continuation of the present structure. They would imagine that, although the province was called independent, a way would be found to associate it with Pakistan later;
- (e) if the N.W.F.P. decided to adhere to Hindustan, it would be completely cut off territorially. Pandit Nehru agreed that it was right and fair that elections should be held in the N.W.F.P. before the transfer of power but said that he was opposed to them being held too hurriedly;
- (f) there were considerable difficulties inherent in any suggestion that two independent Sovereign States should share the same External Affairs organisation. External Affairs, he considered, were not wholly connected with Defence, as had been suggested. Pandit Nehru claimed that any persons put forward by Pakistan for diplomatic appointments would be completely Muslim League minded, whereas Hindustan would appoint people from a wide and largely non-political field. Difficulties would be created if, for example, an Indian ambassador somewhere represented the point of view of an united India, whilst his counsellor appointed by Pakistan was concerned only with the affairs of Pakistan; but he felt that a joint Consular service might perhaps be workable;
- (g) under any plan which created a centre to begin with, the Muslim League provinces would always have the option of breaking away whenever they wanted to. This, Pandit Nehru considered, would be a considerable threat which should not be dealt with simply by the fact that Congress would have a permanent majority;
- (h) the process of separation was bound to take a long time. During the interim period representatives of the Constituent Assemblies of Hindustan and Pakistan could meet together to consider common subjects. Eventually power might be handed over to these Constituent Assemblies. Meanwhile the Interim Government should continue in operation, gradually transferring its power;
- (i) the Constituent Assembly was due to end its preliminary session soon. Then it was supposed to break up into sections. He could look into the possibility of extending the preliminary session to avoid this happening before the overall decision was announced. There were matters like the drafting of Constitutional principles which could be got on with meanwhile;
- (j) he agreed that there was no necessity for the choice by other

provinces of their future to wait upon the readiness of the N.W.F.P. to make its decision;

- (k) in drawing up a time-table for the Constituent Assembly the previous day, the conclusion had been reached that a Constitution would be drafted by 31st October 1947....

Pandit Nehru said he thought that the future of Kashmir might produce a difficult problem.<sup>5</sup>

5. Mountbatten had emphasised that States would have complete freedom of choice as to which Constituent Assembly they should join, independent of geographical considerations.

#### **14. Mountbatten's Record of Interview with Nehru<sup>1</sup>**

First of all I discussed with him telegram No. 5058-S of the 18th April, from the Secretary of State, asking me to influence Nehru to accept an invitation to send a representative to London for Commonwealth consultations, to discuss the Japanese question. He told me that he had heard of this proposed conference, but had not seen any direct invitation as yet. He personally was quite prepared to accept if the Cabinet would agree and if the invitation came but was afraid he could not spare the time to go himself, particularly in the near future with the problems of the decision about the transfer of power coming to the boil. He even said that it was unlikely that any Congress Member of the Cabinet could be spared to go to London on the Sterling Balances Mission.<sup>2</sup>

I told him that Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan had already spoken to me complaining at this attitude, and that I really couldn't recommend him to go on such a vital mission without a Congress representative. Nehru suggested Dr. Matthai and Mr. Bhabha; but I said they were minority representatives and could not take the weight of a Congress decision, and that

1. New Delhi, 22 April 1947. Extracts *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 10, pp 361-362.
2. Discussions between Britain and India about the sterling balances were to open on 9 July. In the event, the Indian delegation was a purely official one.

I should personally advise Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan against going to London without a Congress representative; for however busy Congress representatives were going to be as a result of my present discussions and H.M.G.'s announcement, it was certain that the Muslim League would be equally busy if not more so.

He then asked me whether I could get the Chancellor of the Exchequer<sup>3</sup> to come to India, and I told him definitely "No", that he was far too busy.

I next attacked Pandit Nehru on the subject of the Political Adviser's letter to P.S.V. of the 21st April; and expressed my great disappointment that a man whom I had regarded as a statesman and as a friend should have descended once more to the level of a demagogue in making inflammatory speeches at the States People's Conference in Gwalior.<sup>4</sup> I put the arguments in Sir Conrad Corfield's letter very forcibly to him; and, to my surprise, he admitted their validity. He informed me that he had been wrongly reported in the press. So far from being a demagogue and a hot-headed leader, he was keeping the extreme elements in order. He was, he considered, on the side of monarchy; but he was also trying to prevent Rulers from making unilateral decisions without consulting the wishes of their own people, for this could only end in disaster. He was not speaking as a member of Congress, and certainly not as a Member of the Interim Government, but as President of the States People's Organisation.

He said his statement had been misquoted in the press. He had not threatened to treat those Indian States that did not forthwith send representatives to the Constituent Assembly as hostile; but said that failure to send representatives to the Constituent Assembly was behaving in a hostile manner to the Constituent Assembly and to their own people, and would produce reactions accordingly.<sup>5</sup> He agreed that it was not essential for States to send their representatives to the Constituent Assembly

3. Hugh Dalton.

4. The reference was particularly to Nehru's speech on 18 April 1947 at which he was reported to have declared that "Any Indian State which does not come into the Constituent Assembly now will be regarded as hostile." Corfield, the Political Adviser, observed that the States were expected to join only when representatives of the sections reassembled to settle the Union constitution. He added that the Rulers would be fully justified in deferring any decision about joining the Constituent Assembly "until it is known whether it will become the fully representative body envisaged by the Cabinet Mission or whether negotiations will have to be conducted with another Assembly or an Assembly in a different form."

5. Mountbatten wrote to Corfield on 22 April 1947 about Nehru also having told him that "failure to consult the will of their people in any way would also be behaving in a hostile manner."

prior to the new decision provided it were not long delayed; but the main advice he would give to the Rulers was that they should consult the wishes of their people and make them feel that they were coming in together into whichever Constituent Assembly they finally decided to join.

I must confess that he seemed most reasonable about the whole thing.

Next, I discussed the information from the Governor of the N.W.F.P. saying that the political prisoners whom the Congress Government were prepared to release were refusing to leave the jail.<sup>6</sup> I told him that I had talked to all the Muslim League Members of the Cabinet and had urged them to use their influence to call off any form of aggressive political movement that could lead to violence; but that I felt that, when I got up there on my visit next week and saw both the Government and the leaders of the Opposition, I must be allowed to make it clear that if I considered it necessary I should order new elections.

Pandit Nehru raised no objection to this, provided, he said, I undertook to connect it entirely with the question of ascertaining the will of the people in connection with the transfer of power and made it quite clear that any idea of an election could in no way be connected with the present situation, and further that I should warn them that, so far from their activities helping the situation, it would be the one thing which might prevent the election taking place, at all events for some time.

I undertook to abide by this.

6. Following the Gandhi-Jinnah appeal for peace, the North-West Frontier Province Government released all political prisoners on 19 April 1947. The League leaders in detention, however, refused to accept their freedom or to suspend agitation unless the Congress Ministry resigned or a general election were ordered.

## **15. Account of Eric Mieville's Interview with Nehru<sup>1</sup>**

### I

I saw Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru this afternoon and went through the draft

1. New Delhi, 30 April 1947. Two accounts are printed here. The first is in Mieville's letter to Mountbatten, 30 April 1947, and the second is in Mountbatten's personal report, 1 May 1947. These are printed in *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 10, pp. 488-489 and 536 respectively.

statement with him.<sup>2</sup> He was, of course, well aware of its contents and at the end he only made two comparatively small points. The first was elections in the N.W.F.P.<sup>3</sup> He said that he thought they were both unnecessary and dangerous and if they were connected in people's minds in any way with the terrible things that were happening there now, he was confident that the Congress would have nothing to do with the elections whatsoever. He then went on to tell me of the iniquitous behaviour of the officials in the province from the Governor downwards and particularly referred to D.I.K. from which he had had many very disturbing reports.<sup>4</sup>

His next point was the representation of British Baluchistan,<sup>5</sup> to which also Mr. Jinnah referred in his conversation with me this morning but which I omitted to mention in my report to you. He said that in leaving the decision to the Shahi Jirga we were, in effect, leaving it to a few feudal landlords and we were not consulting the people as a whole. There were three popular organisations in British Baluchistan and he felt that a scheme should be devised for a wider electorate in order to include these organisations which are: Anjuman-e-Watan, Jamiat-ul-Ulema and Muslim League. In his opinion they should have a voice in the matter in conjunction with the Shahi Jirga. He admitted that it would take time to organise this but said that really whoever represented Baluchistan would not contribute much and that therefore if their representative were not elected until the end of the year it would make no difference.

2. The draft statement dated 30 April 1947 said that since the announcement of 20 February to transfer power by June 1948 there had been no agreement among the main political parties of India on any form of unified Government arrangements must be made to demit power by the due date to more than one authority, "if that should prove to be the desire of the people of India, as expressed by their elected representatives." A procedure was also set out for determining the successor authorities. For the text of the draft statement see *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. 10, pp. 496-499.
3. According to the draft statement a general election was to be held in the N.W.F.P., as a preliminary step in order to determine whether or not people favoured a partition of India.
4. Serious communal disturbances broke out in the Dera Ismail Khan district of the North-West Frontier Province following a violent demonstration by the Muslim League at the district headquarters on 15 April 1947.
5. In British Baluchistan, according to the draft statement, the members of the Shahi Jirga and the non-official members of the Quetta Municipality were to decide whether or not to join the existing Constituent Assembly. They were also to elect a person to represent British Baluchistan in further constitutional discussions.

He made one further point and that was that the notional partition of Bengal and the Punjab should be by constituencies and not by districts.<sup>6</sup>

He finally talked to me about the Political Department and the winding up of the Residencies.<sup>7</sup> As regards Political Officers, he said that Sir Geoffrey Prior, the A.G.G. in Baluchistan, had been behaving very badly in that he was obviously anti-Congress. So far as the Residencies are concerned, he said that he had been given to understand that many important papers were being destroyed by the Residents who were now all winding up their offices, and he suggested that many of the papers might be of great historical interest and that a Committee of non-officials might be appointed to go through them and keep those that they considered suitable.<sup>8</sup>

## II

16. The position now is pretty tricky. When Mievile saw Nehru with the plan, he was very upset and said that in no circumstances would Congress agree to yield through violence and pressure to fresh elections being held in the N.W.F.P. When Mievile pointed out that this was entirely for me and the Governor to decide, Nehru said "If you force this issue on us, we shall not contest the elections." This may possibly be quite a good thing, as there are only 7% Hindus in this province.

6. In Bengal and Punjab the Legislative Assemblies were to sit in two parts, one representing Muslim majority districts and the other the remaining districts in order to decide about the partition of these provinces.
7. A news agency report on 30 April 1947 predicted the imminent dissolution of the Political Department in accordance with the British Government's announcement of 20 February. It added that the Residencies and Agencies would be wound up in a phased manner.
8. Mountbatten commented: "I agree and ask Political Department to stop destruction until I can consult Sir Conrad Corfield"

## 16. To Lord Mountbatten

*Draft Prepared by Nehru<sup>1</sup>*

*Final text as amended by  
Mahatma Gandhi<sup>2</sup>*

1 May 1947  
New Delhi

The Congress Working Committee met this afternoon and had the advantage of Mr. Gandhi's presence and advice. I thought it desirable to acquaint them with the major developments that had taken place since their last meeting and, in particular, with the steps that you propose to take in the near future. Five of the members of the Committee are Members of the Interim Government.

2. Neither I nor my colleagues of the Interim Government, who were present at our meeting, know the full extent of the proposals that Lord Ismay is taking with him to London. But you have been good enough to keep me informed of the broad outlines of these proposals and I placed these before my Committee. I felt that it was important that the Committee should know them and should express their opinion confidentially in regard to them at this stage in order to avoid any misunderstanding at a later stage. I am writing this letter at the instance of the Committee to convey their reac-

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1. J.N. Collection

2. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 10, pp 517-519.

3. Ismay flew to London on 2 May 1947 to secure the British Government's approval of the first draft of Mountbatten's plan dated 1 May 1947. See *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. 10, pp. 550-553.

tions to recent developments and the new proposals, in so far as we know them.

3. It has been our Committee's earnest desire that India should achieve her freedom peacefully and in an orderly manner. Our whole policy, even in regard to conflict, has been peaceful. We had accepted the Cabinet Mission's Scheme last year, even though we did not approve of it wholly, in the hope that it may lead to such a peaceful and cooperative transfer of power to Indian hands. Subsequently we accepted in its entirety the British Government's interpretation of this Scheme, which they issued on December 6th, 1946, although this was contrary to our own interpretation. In the same hope of achieving results peacefully, we welcomed H.M.G.'s announcement of February 20, 1947. We have tried to adhere faithfully to the Cabinet Mission's Scheme in our work in the Constituent Assembly and otherwise.

4. We have, however, been faced with a major difficulty—the direct action policy of the Muslim League, started in August last, which has deliberately encouraged violence and disorder and which has resulted in murder, arson and loot in many parts of India. This

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4. We have, however, been faced with a major difficulty. The policy of the Muslim League, started in August last, has deliberately encouraged violence and disorder and has resulted in murder, arson and loot in many parts of India.<sup>4</sup> This has affected the functioning of

<sup>4</sup> The Council of the Muslim League had resolved on 29 July 1946 to achieve Pakistan through a policy of direct action. This policy found its first expression in the Calcutta riots, which followed the observance of 16 August by the Muslim League as "Direct Action" day.

has affected the functioning of both the Central Government and several provincial governments. It has indeed been the dominant feature of Indian politics during the past eight months.

5. In view of the fact that we had made it clear at the outset that there should be no compulsion in making or enforcing a constitution for India on any unwilling parts, the necessity for this direct action was not obvious, unless it was meant to terrorise and compel others against their will. The announcement of February 20, 1947, led to an intensification of this Muslim League policy of direct action, and what used to be riots now developed into organised large-scale violent attempts to overpower provincial governments. This policy was followed in the Punjab, in Assam and in the N.W.F.P. In spite of the most horrible consequences of this policy, it was not stopped or even suspended. Our invitation to the Muslim League to send their representatives to meet ours was not responded to. We reiterated again that there must be no compulsion, and even indicated our acceptance of the principle of a partition of India in order to avoid conflict.

6. We welcomed your proposal to

both the Central Government and several provincial governments. It has indeed been the dominant feature of Indian politics during the past eight months.

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6. Our invitation to the Muslim

5. The Muslim League's civil disobedience campaign in the North-West Frontier Province and the Punjab led to large-scale riotings in those provinces and brought down the coalition government of Khizr Hayat Khan in the Punjab on 2 March 1947.

issue a joint appeal for peace and for a declaration that violence must on no account be used for political objectives. We had hoped that this would naturally lead to the cessation or withdrawal of the Muslim League direct action movement as this was based and was being carried on violence and coercion and much else that was even worse. No such change has occurred, and indeed there are indications that there will be an intensification of this method.

League to send their representatives to meet ours was not responded to.<sup>6</sup> We reiterated that we were against any compulsion over any part of India, and even indicated our acceptance of the principle of a partition of India in order to avoid conflict.

7. We had hoped that the joint appeal for peace and the declaration that violence must on no account be used for political objectives would lead to the withdrawal of the Muslim League's 'direct action' movement and the cessation of organised violence. This did not happen, and indeed there are indications that there will be an intensification of this policy.

7. Every proposal and every change must be viewed in this context. If any policy is to be influenced by the kind of brutal and terroristic methods that have prevailed thus far, then the inevitable result will be civil war on an extensive scale. The continuous appeasement of those who employ such methods and a submission to these tactics is the surest way to encourage them and to produce other dangerous reactions. We can on no account be

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6. The Congress invitation to the Muslim League for a joint discussion was conveyed on 9 March 1947 by its General Secretary, Shankerrao Deo, to Liaquat Ali Khan, who replied on 13 March that the matter would be considered at the next meeting of the Working Committee of the League. On 14 April, however, Liaquat Ali Khan wrote to Shankerrao Deo, "In view of the discussions which are now in progress between the Viceroy and the Indian leaders, it is not likely that a meeting of the Working Committee will be called until a definite stage in the talks has been reached"

parties to such a policy. Yet this is the policy which has been generally pursued in India during the past eight months or more.

8. I feel I must lay stress on this as it is the dominating feature of the situation and everything else is secondary Unless this is appreciated there can be no common approach to our problems.

9. This applies, in particular, today to the situation in the Frontier Province. We wish to make it clear that we can be no parties to a surrender to this violence of the Muslim League which has resulted in horrible tragedy and which is still continuing and finding encouragement. We have not seen any condemnation of the events in the Frontier from any Muslim League leader.

10. Any proposal to put an end to a duly constituted provincial government having a large majority at its command, and to hold elections as a result of the terrorism of the Muslim League must be considered a surrender and an abdication and must be resisted by us

11. All these matters are intimately connected with the functioning of the Interim Government. It is not

on no account be parties to such a policy.

9. We feel that we must lay stress on this as it is the dominating feature of the situation and other matters are secondary. Unless this is appreciated there can be no common approach to our problems.

10. This applies in particular today to the situation in the Frontier Province. We wish to make it clear that we cannot agree to a surrender to this violence of the Muslim League which has resulted in horrible tragedy and which is still continuing and finding encouragement. We have not seen any condemnation of the events in the Frontier from any Muslim League leader.

11. Any proposal to put an end to a duly constituted provincial government having a large majority at its command, and to hold elections as a result of terrorism must be considered a surrender and must be resisted.<sup>7</sup>

7. On 28 April 1947, during his visit to the North-West Frontier Province, Mountbatten discussed with the Governor and the provincial ministers the possibility of holding elections, after imposing Section 93, to determine the future of the province

possible to continue this in its present form if some of its Members occupy themselves in encouraging violent methods and organised attempts to upset governments by force.

12. In regard to the proposals which, I presume, Lord Ismay is carrying with him to London, my Committee are prepared to accept the principle of partition based on self-determination as applied to definitely ascertained areas. This involves the partition of Bengal and Punjab. As you know, we are passionately attached to the idea of a United India, but we have accepted the partition of India in order to avoid conflict and compulsion. In order to give effect to this partition every effort should be made to meet the wishes and the interests of the people affected by it. Even before the partition an administrative division of Bengal and the Punjab is an obvious and urgent necessity.

In regard to Baluchistan, it would be improper for a few Sardars of the Shahi Jirga or some nominated members of the Quetta municipality to decide the future of the province. An attempt should be made to consult the people of the province. There is still plenty of time to devise some method for this purpose.

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13. Even before and apart from such partition, recent events have made an administrative division

of both Bengal and Punjab an obvious and urgent necessity.

14. In regard to Baluchistan, it would be improper for a few Sardars of the Shahi Jirga or some nominated members of the Quetta municipality to decide the future of the province. An attempt should be made to consult the people of the province. There is still plenty of time to devise some method for this purpose.

15. I have not entered in this letter into any detailed consideration of all your proposals as we have not got them before us in their final form.<sup>8</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. On 2 May Mountbatten in reply said that he had taken note of "the Committee's acceptance of the principle of partition based on the will of the Indian people" and hoped to have a further discussion with Nehru on the whole matter at their next meeting.

## 17. Mountbatten's Note on Interview with Nehru<sup>1</sup>

Although he still accepted the need for ascertaining the will of the people in the N.W.F.P. before the transfer of power, he had been very disturbed by a meeting held with the N.W.F.P. Provincial Government representatives, Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Congress leaders (including Gandhi) in Delhi recently.

The Provincial Government's view was that even a referendum held now would be yielding to force and would upset the delicately balanced equilibrium in the Frontier resulting in grave disorders. Nehru supported this view to me, which presumably means that Congress High Command would connive at such disorders. Nehru therefore wanted the referendum or even election not to take place until the Constituent Assembly had drafted at any rate the essentials of a Constitution. It was made clear to him that this would involve an entirely unacceptable delay.

I pointed out that Caroe had stated that unless an announcement was included in the plan that an election or referendum would be held in the near future he foresaw a real flare-up throughout the province.

Nehru then asked me whether I was prepared to take the word of a man who is notoriously anti-Congress against the Provincial Government's word; to which I replied that quite apart from accepting the view of the Governor the mere fact that there was a divergence of opinion rendered a referendum all the more urgent.

1. Mountbatten's telegram to Ismay, Simla, 8 May 1947 Extracts *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 10, p. 697.

## 18. A Draft for H.M.G.'s Statement<sup>1</sup>

North-West Frontier Province occupies a special position. H.M.G. are committed by their statement of February 20th to part with power in

1. From Mountbatten to Ismay, Simla, 8 May 1947. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 10, p. 698. This telegram was drafted by Nehru. See part item 20. A clause giving effect to the provisions contained in this draft was incorporated in the British Government's statement of 7 June 1947.

India by June 1948. It is their desire however to hand over power in as large a measure as possible at as early a date as practicable. If Constituent Assembly had been fully representative of the whole of India there would have been no difficulty in handing over power to it. But as is known while it represents a very large part of India it does not fully represent certain provinces. H.M.G. have made it clear before, and this has been accepted by Indian leaders, that there should be no compulsion in forcing a constitution on unwilling parts. It becomes therefore necessary to find out definitely what parts of India are willing to accept the authority of the Constituent Assembly. Those parts that are represented in the Constituent Assembly at present may be presumed to accept that authority. This presumption does not arise in regard to Bengal, Punjab and Sind. A procedure will have to be evolved to find out the decision of Bengal and Punjab as a whole, or in parts, in regard to joining an Indian Union. If as a result of this the decision is that the Punjab as a whole, or in part, does not wish to adhere to the Union, then N.W.F.P. will be placed in a peculiar position, and it will become necessary for the people of the province to decide, in view of the new situation that would arise, whether they wish to join the Union of India or not. In such a contingency it is proposed to hold a referendum on this specific issue in the N.W.F.P. The referendum will be with the concurrence of the Provincial Government and under the supervision of the Governor-General. As soon as decisions have been arrived at by the provinces concerned on this issue, power will be transferred in accordance with them.

#### **19. V.P. Menon's Note on Talk with Nehru<sup>1</sup>**

I had a discussion with Pandit Nehru this morning on a plan for the transfer of power as an interim arrangement on the basis of a dominion constitution. The following are the main conclusions which have been accepted by him.

1. Simla, 8 May 1947 Enclosure to V.P. Menon's letter to Vallabhbhai Patel dated 10 May 1947. Printed in *Sardar Patel's Correspondence 1945-50*, Vol. 4, pp. 116-118.

V P. Menon (1894-1966); Reforms Commissioner, 1942-47; Secretary to the Governor-General (Public), 1945-46; Cabinet Secretary, 1945, Secretary, and for some time Adviser, to the Government of India, Ministry of States, 1947-51; Governor of Orissa, May 1951-July 1951; member, Finance Commission, 1951-52, founder-member of the Swatantra Party.

1. The starting point for the early transfer of power should be the Government of India Act, 1935, with modifications.
  2. If the transfer of power could be brought about to a united India, it was certainly the best solution.
  3. Pandit Nehru recognised that it might not be possible to have a united India at present. He was therefore agreeable to parting with power in Hindustan to an Executive Council elected by the Hindustan Constituent Assembly. The same procedure might be adopted in the separated area.
  4. The Secretary of State, the India Office and the special powers of the Governors and the Governor-General under the Government of India Act, 1935, should go.
  5. The Indian Legislature should be replaced by the Constituent Assembly.
  6. The Governor-General would be common to both Hindustan and Pakistan. Pandit Nehru himself suggested that the present Governor-General might be re-appointed by His Majesty.
  7. The Governors of Hindustan provinces would be appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Central Executive Council for Hindustan.
  8. For matters of common concern a Joint Council might be set up.
  9. There should not be any interference by Pakistan in Hindustan except in so far as it affects Pakistan.
2. In addition to the above, Pandit Nehru made the following points:
- a. The preamble to the new Government of India Act should contain a reference to the Constituent Assembly and also an indication that the Act was an interim arrangement till a new constitution was framed by Indians
  - b. The position of India should be exactly the same as that of any other dominion and therefore the title "Emperor of India" now held by the King should disappear.
  - c. He was not very particular whether the term "dominion" was used in the Act or not; but he agreed that a better term would be "Commonwealth of Free Nations."

d. There should not be any provision either in the Act or in the Instrument of Instructions for the representation of minorities in the Executive Council. He asserted that it was not the intention of the Congress to do down any minority but they would not like any imposition in this respect and the matter should be left to the good sense of the Congress.

3. We had a long argument about the Indian States and the consequences resulting from the lapse of paramountcy. Pandit Nehru suggested that the powers now exercised by the Crown Representative in respect of the three subjects of Defence, External Affairs and Communications should be transferred to the new Dominion Government. I pointed out to him the difficulties in the way of such an arrangement. He was very particular that some sort of standstill agreement should be reached with the States, say, for a period of two years till it could be superseded by an agreed arrangement.

4. When we were discussing about the division of India into Hindustan and Pakistan, Pandit Nehru indicated that H.M.G. should not give an award on this. The less H.M.G. did in this direction the better for all concerned. He was of opinion that H.M.G. should only indicate a procedure or set up machinery for decision in the event of people in any particular area desiring separation.

5. Pandit Nehru stressed that the psychological effect of power being transferred earlier than 1948 would be an invaluable factor in the long-term view of Indo-British relationship. He quite appreciated that it would take a considerable time before the details of partition could be worked out. Once complete transfer of power was made as an interim arrangement on Dominion Status lines, the parties would have time to think things over with leisure and sobriety and proceed meanwhile with the urgent problems of administration and development. Further, arrangements for common matters and the part that the Governor-General played during the interim period would go very far in cementing the good relationship between Great Britain and India. He shared the hope that once the two Governments sat together and started drafting agreements they might find that these agreements were required in respect of so many matters that they might ultimately come right round to the view that an impassable barrier could not be created between the two Indias and that after all a unified constitution was better for all concerned.

## 20. Minutes of the Tenth Miscellaneous Meeting of the Viceroy<sup>1</sup>

### Item 1

Pandit Nehru said that he feared that, if the N.W.F.P. were dealt with under a separate procedure (as was envisaged in the present plan), enormous complications would ensue. Whatever was done in the N.W.F.P. should be "in the all-India context". It was essential to know definitely which way the N.W.F.P. wanted to go. But the same principles should apply throughout India. Elections had been held only a year ago on the very issue which was now being questioned.<sup>2</sup> Possibly there would be new elections soon (i.e. after the new Constitution had been decided) all over India. A still further referendum or election in the N.W.F.P. was likely to lead to odd results. Unless they were completely necessary, they should be avoided. A referendum in the N.W.F.P. would result in demands for referenda from hundreds of places in India.

Menon pointed out that, under the present plan, Bengal and the Punjab were to be given the option of partition. And then of which Constituent Assembly they would join. This latter choice should surely apply "in the all-India context" also to the N.W.F.P.

Pandit Nehru stated that representatives of the N.W.F.P. were present in the existing Constituent Assembly.<sup>3</sup> Why should that position be altered? He then gave further details of a plan which he considered better than the plan contained in the Draft Announcement. This is recorded separately in Item 2 below. His point that provinces should not be given the right to secede until after the principles of the Constitution had been prepared applied, *inter alia*, to the N.W.F.P. Menon made it clear that the delay involved in this plan would be unacceptable.

Pandit Nehru said that there was a fundamental difference of opinion as to what was right in the N.W.F.P. The Governor thought that, un-

1. Held at Simla on 8 May 1947. Extracts *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 10, pp. 670-675. Mountbatten, Nehru, Merville, Brockman, V P. Menon and Erskine Crum were present at this meeting.
2. In the elections to the provincial legislatures in the first quarter of 1946, the demand for Pakistan had been a live issue. In the N.W.F.P. assembly, out of 50 seats, the Congress had secured 30 seats, including 19 of the 38 seats reserved for Muslims. Two representatives of Jamiat-ul-Ulema joined the Congress later on.
3. Representatives for the North-West Frontier Province in the Constituent Assembly were Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Abdul Ghaffar Khan for the Congress, and Sardar Bahadur Khan for the Muslim League.

less there was an election or referendum, there would be major trouble. The Provincial Government, on the other hand, was quite clear that an election or referendum, except "in the all-India context", would cause trouble.

Pandit Nehru said that there had already been a flare-up in the N.W.F.P. It would be risky now to do anything to cause a bigger one. He did not consider that Mr. Jinnah's latest appeal was a call for non-violence at all.<sup>4</sup> The whole emphasis in that appeal was, in his opinion, on the continuation of the present movement. He was sure that the effect would be that the movement would carry on. It could not be carried on peacefully. However, Pandit Nehru declared this movement was collapsing.

The Viceroy said that he had pointed out to Mr. Jinnah, who was convinced that a referendum in the N.W.F.P. would result in his favour, the folly of continuing destruction there. Mr. Jinnah had, he believed, seen the force of this argument.

Pandit Nehru stated that in the last two months, 200,000 Hindus and Sikhs had migrated from the N.W.F.P. to Northern Punjab. This affected the population of the province.<sup>5</sup> The migration was continuing daily. The Hindus and Sikhs were the economic background of the N.W.F.P. Without them, the whole economic structure there would collapse.

Sir Eric Mieville said that he did not fully grasp the point made by Pandit Nehru that the procedure at present envisaged did not link up the N.W.F.P. to the "all-India context".

Pandit Nehru's reply was that the point which he had made was that there should be such a link-up. He reiterated his opinion that there was more likely to be trouble in the N.W.F.P. if a referendum was held than if it was not. The Viceroy pointed out that this was not the Governor's opinion. And, quite apart from taking the Governor's opinion, the very fact that there was a divergence of opinion rendered a referendum all the more necessary. Such a referendum would, of course, be run from an outside authority.

Pandit Nehru said that it was not easy for the Congress High Command to issue orders on this subject. Their picture was that the Governor and many of the officials were opposed to Congress, and were try-

4 On 7 May 1947, Jinnah probably approved of the decision of the Frontier Muslim League not to call off their civil disobedience movement and desired that it be kept peaceful.

5. Press reports from Lahore during May stated that a large-scale exodus of Hindus and Sikhs, including many industrialists, was in progress from the Western Punjab, the Frontier Province and Baluchistan in expectation of the incorporation of those areas in Pakistan

ing to bring about a set of circumstances to the disadvantage of Congress.

Pandit Nehru said that he was intellectually in favour of a referendum. But it would be better if it could be held in a calmer atmosphere.

The Viceroy pointed out that, the longer such a referendum would be postponed and the present situation was allowed to drag on, the worse feelings would become. A referendum would quickly settle matters one way or the other. Pandit Nehru's advice, he pointed out, had always been to act quickly. Surely the only way to find out whether the Governor or the Provincial Government was right was to hold a referendum.

Pandit Nehru said that he agreed that a referendum would settle matters—but only if held in a peaceful atmosphere with a clear understanding on the part of the voters of the issues.

The Viceroy said that he fully accepted that a clear choice of the issues involved was essential. He was also trying to obtain a peaceful atmosphere—but the longer we waited, the worse conditions would become.

Pandit Nehru said that he supposed that the Viceroy had to rely on the Governor's advice; he himself did not, at all.

The Viceroy reiterated that the only way to find out who was right was to hold a referendum.

Pandit Nehru gave his opinion that, if the "whole psychological background, terrors and suspicions" were upset, there would be more trouble than at present.

The Viceroy pointed out that, from the conversation so far, it was clear that the only disagreement was not whether to hold a referendum, but when. Pandit Nehru agreed.<sup>6</sup>

#### Item 2

Pandit Nehru gave the outline of a plan which he considered preferable to the plan contained in the Draft Announcement. He called his plan "The Cabinet Mission's plan with modifications", and explained that it was on the following lines:—

1. Power should be demitted to the Central Government in June 1947.
2. The Central Government should then be responsible to either the Constituent Assembly or the Central Legislative Assembly. He would be for the former but realised that the latter might be easier.
3. Any suggestion that Pakistan should be created straight away should be ruled out.

<sup>6</sup> As a result of this discussion a telegram was sent to Ismay in London which contained a draft dictated to V.P. Menon by Nehru after the meeting See *ante*, item 18

4. Provinces should be given the option, as in the Cabinet Mission's plan, of forming groups.

5. This option would later be extended to freedom to leave the Union of India altogether; but this stage would not be reached until after the principles of a new Constitution had been worked out. This would take about three months.

6. At, but not before, this stage the question of the partition of the provinces would arise.

Sir Eric Mieville asked whether the Muslim League would ever enter the Constituent Assembly. Pandit Nehru replied that he had no doubt that they would if power was demitted to a Central Government responsible to the Constituent Assembly. It was possible that inter-party cooperation therein would break down—but that contingency was possible at any time.

Pandit Nehru gave his opinion that, once the principle of partition was recognized anywhere, there would be no limit. Mr. Jinnah was saying that there should be a Muslim enclave in every province in India. If the burden of decision, on the other hand, was cast on the Interim Government they would have to face realities.

Sir Eric Mieville asked what Mr. Jinnah was, in Pandit Nehru's opinion, likely to do if power was demitted to the Central Government. Would he order the Muslim League representatives in the Central Government to resign? Pandit Nehru said that he was quite certain that Mr. Jinnah would do no such thing. The Muslim League had entered the present Government at all costs, and at all costs they would remain.

The Viceroy said that he considered it essential to meet Pandit Nehru's views as far as possible. A telegram should be sent to London expressing the hope that sufficient emphasis would be laid in the plan in the Draft Announcement on the "Union of India". Provinces adhering to the existing Constituent Assembly should be referred to as "constituting the Union of India"; and those which did not should be referred to as "contracting out of the Union."

Pandit Nehru declared that he could say with some assurance that the Congress-majority part of India would be able to take over power almost immediately. He could not, of course, answer for the Pakistan provinces.

Pandit Nehru gave his opinion that the voting on the future of Sylhet

7. A suggestion to this effect was made by Nehru at the meeting. Mountbatten subsequently telegraphed it to Ismay, adding, "I welcome the significance of dropping title 'Republic of India' and therefore support this suggestion, which please put forward to the Cabinet".

was likely to be close. There was a fairly large proportion of Muslims in Sylhet who did not want to join up with Bengal.

Pandit Nehru gave his opinion that three days would be an ample period for full consultation with the Congress Working Committee between the opening of the meeting with the five Indian leaders and the issue of the announcement containing the plan.

## **21. Mountbatten's Record of Interview with Nehru<sup>1</sup>**

He first raised the question of the appointment of ambassadors, governors, etc. I told him that he should not continue to make these appointments, as was at present being done, on an ad hoc basis; but should make out a full list of the posts to be filled and the names of those to be appointed. He agreed to do this. We also agreed that he should now go ahead with appointing representatives to foreign countries without consulting the Muslim League; Pakistan, when formed, could either appoint their own, share his, or share the British representatives.

I asked him what he thought of the plan for transferring power on a Dominion Status basis in 1947. I pointed out that it was entirely up to him whether or not he wanted to go ahead with this plan; the advantages were almost entirely on his side. He said that he was most interested in the plan, but pointed out that he could not rush his supporters on any suggestion of long-term Dominion Status. Everything depended on the interim period and the way the British behaved.

He thought that V.P. Menon had the timing of this scheme absolutely wrong. In Nehru's opinion the Constitution would be finished by September, the new Government would be ready to take office by October; elections (unless a new electoral roll was required) would be held by then too; and the whole process would be over by the end of the year. Therefore, in his opinion, there was no question of the interim period lasting beyond June 1948.

In view of the fact that he thought that it was such a simple problem, and as his views on the time-factor were so very different to Menon's I decided to have a meeting with them both the following day.

<sup>1</sup> Held on 9 May 1947. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 10, pp. 714-715

## 22. Minutes of the Eleventh Miscellaneous Meeting of the Viceroy<sup>1</sup>

Pandit Nehru said that he considered it very desirable that there should be a transfer of power as soon as possible on a Dominion Status basis.<sup>2</sup> Congress had made a proposal to this effect at the beginning of the war.<sup>3</sup> He would show His Excellency the statement which had been made. The proposal had been repeated since. The basic reason for wanting an early transfer of power, apart from the desire of the Indians to control their own affairs, was that any developments in India would not otherwise take place properly. The present system of frequent references to H.M.G. produces the psychology of always looking elsewhere for decisions, of continual bidding by the different parties; of a lack of reality; and of an absence of self-reliance. At present there were continual references to the British Cabinet, who were doubtless trying to do the fair thing but who could not be in full possession of the psychological background in India. Their mental processes were, in his opinion, inclined to be too legalistic and logical.

Pandit Nehru said that the only real difficulty in his opinion was the possibility of India being divided and Pakistan coming into existence. The normal course would have been for the Government of India Act to have continued subject to modifications and for any Dominion Government formed in India to continue to function for the whole of India. But it was now clear that facilities would have to be given for any part of India which did not wish to remain within the Union to separate. He considered that the Cabinet Mission plan should be adhered to subject to the major variation that provinces should be given the option to

1. Held at Simla on 10 May 1947. Extracts. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 10, pp 731-737. Those present at the meeting were: Mountbatten, Nehru, Mieville, V.P. Menon and Erskine Crum.
2. At the start of the meeting, V.P. Menon, at the instance of Mountbatten, presented his scheme for an early transfer of power. Broadly it proposed that Muslim majority areas should be separated from India and that the transfer of power should be to two Central Governments, India and Pakistan, on the basis of Dominion Status, each having its own Governor-General. Pending the drafting of a constitution by the respective Constituent Assemblies, the interim constitution for each of the two Dominions would be based on the Government of India Act, 1935, suitably adapted for the purpose. The existing central legislature would be dissolved and its place taken by the respective Constituent Assemblies, to which the Central Government in each case would be responsible.
3. See *Selected Works*, Volume 10, section 3, item 6.

opt out of the Union. He considered that provinces should be given an opportunity to see the new Constitution before given the chance of separation. It was in his opinion wrong to put the process of partition first.<sup>4</sup> The proper thing would be that this choice should come when the broad outlines of the future Constitution were decided. According to precedent and practice that would be the more correct procedure. It was very difficult for the normal voter to decide the issue of partition first except on an emotional basis.

Pandit Nehru said that he did not think that the process of granting Dominion Status to one part of India before the other would give rise to many great complications.<sup>5</sup> He supposed that this was theoretically possible. He presumed that as soon as a suitable authority had been set up in Pakistan power would be handed over. He also agreed with the point made by Menon that on the Joint Council there should be no interference by either State in the affairs of the other.<sup>6</sup>

Pandit Nehru said that he did not, however, agree with Menon's estimate of the period involved. He had no doubt that the broad features of the Constitution of the Union of India would be prepared by July. The details would take another month or so to fill in, but it would be possible to proceed on the broad features, and electoral machinery could begin to function. It would take at the most six months or a year before the elections were held. Once power had been transferred it was up to the Government of the Union of India to arrange for all consequences of the transfer. The length of the interim period would depend on what arrangements were made. It might be felt desirable and more convenient not to put a final end to the interim period by June, 1948. But from the psychological point of view it was very dangerous at the present time to hint that the period might be prolonged thereafter. He considered that the interim period might well in fact come to an end when the elections were held, but it would be dangerous to say so at the present stage.

4 V.P. Menon envisaged the partition of the country preceding the framing of the new Constitution, which he believed might not be completed till June 1948.

5 Mountbatten had said that whereas it was fairly easy to transfer power at a very early date, on a basis of Dominion Status, to the Union of India, it might be difficult in the case of Pakistan where there would be no authorities for some time to whom to transfer.

6 Menon had proposed, "In the event of partition, there would be a joint council to deal with matters of common concern between the two states, but there would be no interference by either state in the affairs of the other."

The Viceroy said that he did not consider that the target for the end of the interim period should in any way be connected with June, 1948. That had originally been the target date for transfer of power; and it was hoped to bring the transfer forward by almost a year.

Pandit Nehru gave his view that if the end of the interim period and the further decisions which would then be required were connected with specific contingencies, suspicion would be created. He considered that the end of the interim period should rather be connected with further arrangements in regard to Indo-British relations. Then the issue would be dealt with on the background of the future. He did not feel that this should be compromised by limitations.

The Viceroy reiterated his view that the end of the interim period should be connected with some specific event. Possibly, if the new elections were not suitable event, reconsideration or ratification by the newly elected Government might be. He pointed out that one of the main advantages accruing to India would be the retention of British officers. It was essential to have a new target date to work for by which they would be phased out.

Pandit Nehru said that he did not oppose His Excellency's viewpoint fundamentally, but to say that the date of June, 1948 had been scrapped would certainly create suspicion.

The Viceroy pointed out that the Governor-General would also have to have a specific date towards which to work. He added that if the target date related to reconsideration of Indo-British relations alone there might be considerable agitation for such reconsideration to take place immediately. He had in mind the name of Jayaprakash Narayan in connection with such agitation.

Pandit Nehru said that he also of course wished to avoid such agitation but felt that it would be more likely to be directed against the idea that Congress leaders had consented to a semi-permanent form of Dominion Status. He went on to say that Jayaprakash Narayan had been behaving in a very irresponsible manner recently, but he was an intelligent and honest man.<sup>7</sup> He, Pandit Nehru, had no doubt that Jayaprakash

<sup>7</sup> Speaking at Secunderabad on 7 May 1947, Jayaprakash Narayan accused the British of supporting the demand for Pakistan in the hope of getting military bases and airfields there, and of breaking India's solidarity through the Muslim League and the princes. He exhorted the people to remain prepared "to make sacrifices and bring about conditions which would induce the State to join the Union." He was arrested and exonerated by the Hyderabad Government on 8 May on the charge of creating communal trouble.

Narayan would play an important part in India in the future. He thought that he could bring Jayaprakash Narayan round to accepting a certain line of action but it would be essential for the latter to be able to see matters developing and to have faith in the development. He must see no opportunities for domination or exploitation. Once, however, the new Dominion Status began to function a new atmosphere might well be created.

The Viceroy said that he agreed with Pandit Nehru but felt that his own object would be better served by indicating the end of the interim phase If Jayaprakash Narayan was suspicious of Pandit Nehru's motives, this suspicion might be allayed after a definite date of termination was laid down.

Pandit Nehru gave his opinion that the possibility of Pakistan being set up and the position of the Indian States as separate entities might produce an element of confusion and disruption. It would be of the greatest importance to maintain the closest relations between Pakistan and the Union of India and with the States. The Viceroy said that it might be possible that a Governor-General might be able to help with these problems If, however, the States thought that the period of Dominion Status was to be indefinite they would on account of their dilatory methods never make up their minds.

Pandit Nehru said that he saw the force of His Excellency's arguments and was ready to agree that it might be desirable that the target date of termination of the interim period should be linked up with the formation of a new Government after elections He went on to explain that, over the last many years, there had been tremendous sentiment in India in favour of complete independence. The words "Dominion Status" were likely to irritate because of past associations—although in theory it could be shown that Dominion Status was equivalent to complete independence. Such fine points were not, however, considered or understood by the majority of the people He was afraid that such phraseology might mean to many the continuation of indirect domination He himself was most anxious, apart from sentimental reasons, to have the closest possible relations with the British Commonwealth, but he was not clear himself what form these relations would take. He thought and hoped that it would be possible for the relations to continue without the offending phraseology. He did not intend to talk about "Dominion Status" openly because of the many suspicions He wanted to prepare the ground The world was changing and the problem must be looked at in that context.

Pandit Nehru pointed out that under any form of Dominion Status India would always have the power to leave the Commonwealth when

she wished. The Viceroy agreed with this and pointed out that this fact should be emphasised as well as the target for the termination.

The Viceroy said that he considered the British forces would have to remain under his command until they could be withdrawn which would be as soon as possible. With this Pandit Nehru agreed.

Pandit Nehru said that it seemed to him that the question of the partition of the armed forces should not even be considered until a definite decision had been made on what parts of India were going to break away.<sup>8</sup> It was impossible to work out a plan at present. It was not a question of dividing Hindus and Muslims but of dividing on a territorial basis. Once a definite picture of the future set-up had arisen, the question of whether to divide or not could again be considered. Even if there was insistence on the partition of India he felt that the army should continue to function as a whole. Those who came from the territory of the provinces which had seceded would then go out. The army would, during this period, function in regard to Pakistan by the latter's agreement. He thought that it would be possible to have a Defence Council but asked who would look after the army as a whole.<sup>9</sup>

The Viceroy said that Lord Ismay's reply<sup>10</sup> had been to the effect that this suggestion had not met with support at a meeting of officials of the India Office and the Cabinet Secretariat. They had felt that such phraseology would make those provinces which did not adhere to the existing Constituent Assembly be looked upon as "rebels".

Pandit Nehru said that he did not understand this reference to "rebels". It did not appear to him to be the correct approach.<sup>11</sup>

- 8 During the discussion Mountbatten had said that it was not feasible both to nationalise and partition the army by June 1948. He believed that the rate of nationalisation should be slowed up and partition carried out gradually and on a planned basis. He also visualised that till the Defence Headquarters in Delhi was split, it should be under the Defence Council.
9. Mountbatten quoted the example of the Austro-Hungarian Empire before the 1914-18 war whose Defence Headquarters had consisted of representatives of the armies of Austria and Hungary. He pointed out that in a defence headquarters in Delhi controlling both the armies the officers would not come from the Union of India alone. Nehru agreed.
10. The reference is to the reply to Mountbatten's telegram to Ismay dated 8 May 1947. See *ante*, item 20, fn 7.
11. At this stage Monntbatten instructed his Principal Secretary to draft a telegram to Ismay "expressing the hope that he would continue to press for emphasis on 'The Union of India'."

Pandit Nehru made reference to the statement issued a few days previously by Mr. Suhrawardy.<sup>12</sup> He gave his opinion that this statement was in the main sweet and reasonable containing as it did an appeal not to split Bengal. Towards the end of the statement, however, there was a clear hint that if Calcutta was taken away from Eastern Bengal there would be not much to take. Pandit Nehru expressed the view that it was possible that the Muslims would sack and destroy Calcutta rather than see it separated from East Bengal.<sup>13</sup> He felt that there was likely to be trouble in Calcutta as soon as the announcement was made. He suggested the possibility of such trouble having the backing of the present Provincial Government. The problem was not the same as in the Punjab where the disturbances were likely to be caused by two groups fighting one another. In Calcutta disturbances were more likely to take the form of deliberate destruction.

The Viceroy said that he would raise this point with the Governor of Bengal<sup>14</sup> and ask for an assurance that he had sufficient troops to deal with likely disturbances.<sup>15</sup>

12. In a statement on 27 April 1947, Suhrawardy pleaded for a sovereign and undivided Bengal and visualised its becoming "one of the most powerful and progressive states of the world", if all combined to make it great. He also alleged that Bengal was being exploited by the rest of India and added, "so in the end the tussle will rage round Calcutta and its environments built up largely by the resources of foreigners ..." He made a similar statement on 7 May.
13. Around this time Nehru received a telegram from S.P. Mookerjee about the rumours prevailing in Calcutta that preparations were being made by Muslims for observing an 'Anti-Partition Day' on 10 May.
14. On 16 May 1947, Mountbatten approvingly conveyed to Nehru the reply concerning Suhrawardy's statement received from the Governor of Bengal that he did "not consider that anything in the statement constitutes a threat to promote disorders in Calcutta. Indeed it is only a realistic facing up to the possibility of disturbances occurring if, assuming Bengal is partitioned, the new province of East Bengal is deprived of a share of the resources of Calcutta."
15. At this meeting Nehru also raised the issue of securing a written assurance from Jinnah that he would accept a truncated Pakistan. Mountbatten said that Jinnah had given him such an understanding and if he proved difficult, he would find the Viceroy tough enough.

23. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>

Simla

10 May 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

Thank you for your two letters dated 10th May which I have just received. As suggested by you, I am trying to get a meeting of the Congress Working Committee convened for the 16th or 17th May in Delhi.<sup>2</sup> I have telephoned to Sardar Patel to this effect and I hope he will make the necessary arrangements. Gandhiji and Dr. Khan Sahib are also being invited.

2 I am myself anxious that there should be no avoidable delay in coming to decisions and giving effect to them. I am anxious, however, that in our hurry a wrong step might not be taken which might lead to greater delay. I have been giving a great deal of thought to what you have told me and I find that my mind is not at all clear about the various possible developments. Apart from the original proposals which were put forward somewhat vaguely, there are now other suggestions in addition which introduce a great deal of complexity to the problems we have to face. Each step acts and reacts on the other and we have to consider carefully what the final outcome might be. I confess that I do not see much light and many things trouble me.

3. I shall not go into these matters in this letter because I hope to have a further talk with you. But I am anxious to avoid any misunderstanding. I find from one of your letters that you have asked Caroe to tell Dr. Khan Sahib that I am in general agreement with the procedure suggested, namely a referendum.<sup>3</sup> Now this is the one thing on which there is very strong opinion among my colleagues not only of the Working

1 *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 10, pp 739-740

2 In one of his letters of 10 May 1947, Mountbatten invited Nehru to a round-table meeting on 17 May, the other invitees being Patel, Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan and Baldev Singh, to discuss the British Government's final proposals, prior to their announcement, to transfer power by June 1948. He also urged him to "have your Working Committee available in Delhi and invite Dr. Khan Sahib as well, to be available for you to consult."

3. In his second letter of the same date, Mountbatten wrote that he had recommended to the British Government that a referendum should be conducted in the North-West Frontier Province at a suitable date when the partition of India was clearer. He informed Nehru that he would ask Caroe to tell Khan Sahib that Nehru was in general agreement with this procedure.

Committee but also of Dr. Khan Sahib's Government, and I was specifically asked to inform you of their strong opposition to this. I myself greatly fear that any referendum, before the situation is much clearer and other final decisions have been taken, may lead to grave consequences. In any event such a referendum can only be held with the full concurrence of the Frontier Government. As I have told you, I am in agreement with the idea that the will of the people of the Frontier Province should be consulted before final decisions in regard to the position of the province are taken. But it is very important when this is done and in what context.

4. You will have seen Gandhiji's reactions<sup>4</sup> and an interview that Sardar Patel gave yesterday.<sup>5</sup> I have no doubt that the former should be given due weight, though in regard to some details it does not fit in with the general Congress viewpoint. Sardar Patel's interview is a clear expression of the Congress viewpoint.

5. What I fear is that if the new proposals are not generally agreed to and are a marked departure from the position which flowed from the Cabinet Mission's Scheme, they will result in producing a very great deal of uncertainty in the public mind. This will be unfortunate from every point of view. The Cabinet Mission's Scheme at least produced some certainty. If it cannot be applied in toto, it might be varied to suit the exigencies of the situation. Another landmark which brought some certainty was the declaration of February 20th. If anything happens to shake that feeling of certainty, there will be complete instability in the country. The new proposals, therefore, should fit in as far as possible, subject to necessary variations, with the position as it has been thus far.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. At a meeting at Sodepur Ashram on 9 May, Mahatma Gandhi said, "the British are surely going to quit India and if we have any differences between ourselves let us make it completely our own affair and not approach the British for a settlement." If they quit at the earliest possible moment, he added, "all ills can be settled between ourselves as between brother and brother."
5. In an interview to the press on 9 May, Patel strongly argued for the functioning of the Interim Government "as it now stands" as a Dominion Government "with the Viceroy standing out". This would strengthen the Centre enabling it to put down disorder. Without interference by a third party, the Congress and the Muslim League would settle their differences at once.

24. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>

Simla  
11.5.47

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

You were good enough to speak to me frankly and in a very friendly manner last night and to give me an opportunity to see the tentative proposals<sup>2</sup> I need hardly tell you how much I appreciate your confidence in me or that I am convinced of your earnest desire to help India to achieve her freedom as early as possible. It has been a privilege to get to know you better and I hope that our understanding of each other will be helpful to both and to the wider causes we have at heart.

I read the draft proposals you gave me with the care they deserved and with every desire to absorb them and accept them in so far as I could. But with all the goodwill in the world I reacted to them very strongly. Indeed they produced a devastating effect upon me. The relatively simple proposals that we had previously discussed now appeared, in the garb that H M G. had provided for them, in an entirely new context which gave them an ominous meaning. The whole approach was completely different from what ours had been and the picture of India that emerged frightened me. In fact much that we had done so far was undermined and the Cabinet Mission's Scheme and subsequent developments were set aside, and an entirely new picture presented—a pic-

1 *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 10, pp 756-757. This letter was hand-written.

2. According to the Draft Announcement power was to be transferred to "more than one authority", and in order to determine who "successor authorities" would be the different parts of India were to decide whether their constitution would be framed in the existing Constituent Assembly or jointly with other parts of India or separately. In the Hindu majority provinces their representatives in the Constituent Assembly were to decide this. In Bengal and the Punjab the Legislative Assemblies were to be asked to sit in two parts, one representing Muslim majority districts and the other the remainder of the province, to take this decision. In Assam the M.L.A.s from Sylhet district and those from the remainder of the province were to sit separately for this purpose. In Sind it was to be decided by the members of the Legislative Assembly by a simple majority. In British Baluchistan the members of the Shahi Jirga and non-official members of the Quetta municipality were to take a decision in this regard. In the N.W.F.P a referendum was to be held to decide whether people were or not in favour of partition of British India. As for the States, they were free to arrange by negotiation with those parts of India to which power would be demitted whatever measure of association they considered to be in best interests of their people. For the full text of the Draft Announcement see *The Transfer of Power*, Vol 10, pp 723-728.

ture of fragmentation and conflict and disorder, and, unhappily also, of a worsening of relations between India and Britain. That, I am wholly convinced, was not and is not your intention; nor can I believe that this is H.M.G.'s intention. But H.M.G. seem to function in an ivory tower of their own, isolated from realities in India. They proceed apparently on certain assumptions which have little relevance and ignore the basic factors of the situation in India.

If my reactions were so powerful, you can well imagine what my colleagues and others will think and feel. I think it will be a disaster if something is done now which will dam up the river of progressively friendly relations between Britain and India and reverse its current.

I have written rather hastily a note on the tentative proposals<sup>3</sup>. This is necessarily rather crude as I am in a hurry to let you know how I feel about it all. I tried to make the note brief but it lengthened itself. As soon as it is ready I shall send it to you. Meanwhile I am sending this letter to you to give you some indication of how upset I have been by these proposals which, I am convinced, will be resented and bitterly disliked all over the country.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. See the succeeding item.

## 25. A Note on the Draft Proposals<sup>1</sup>

I have very carefully considered, in the short time at my disposal, the papers shown to me. They are of such far-reaching implications that it is difficult for me to deal with the subject adequately, and in any event a full consultation with my colleagues would be necessary. But as time is limited and any delay in a clear expression of opinion might lead to further steps being taken which may have grave consequences, I am giving below my immediate reactions.

1. Simla, 11 May 1947 *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 10, pp. 766-771.

2. Although I have had no opportunity of consulting my colleagues, I am quite clear that my reactions will be shared by them probably in a stronger measure. The first consideration of the papers produced a devastating effect upon me. The picture presented by the proposals was an ominous one and the whole approach to them appeared to me to be dangerous. Not only do they menace India but also they endanger the future relation between Britain and India. Instead of producing any sense of certainty, security and stability, they would encourage disruptive tendencies everywhere and chaos and weakness. They would particularly endanger important strategic areas.

3. It is stated in the proposals that they have taken shape after full consultation with political leaders in India. That might lead people to think that they have the consent of those leaders. This would be completely wrong in so far as all leaders are concerned except possibly the Muslim League leaders. In our consultations we had proceeded on the present basis of the Cabinet Mission's plan and the statement of February 20th. Owing to stress of circumstances we had agreed to vary this basis to a certain extent, but the general approach continued to be the same. This variation consisted in the acceptance of the fact that certain Muslim majority areas might go out of the Union if they so willed. The Union was still the basic factor. In the new proposals the whole approach has been changed completely and is at total variance with our own approach in the course of recent talks. The proposals start with the rejection of an Indian Union as the successor to power and invite the claims of large numbers of successor States who are permitted to unite if they so wish in two or more States.

4. I have no doubt whatever that the announcement of this new policy and proposals by His Majesty's Government would provoke wide and deep resentment all over the country and no responsible leader of Indian opinion outside the Muslim League would be able to persuade the country to accept or even to acquiesce in them. It seems to me, therefore, essential that His Majesty's Government should be left in no doubt as to the total unacceptability of and opposition to both these proposals and the approach made in them, and also to the consequences which are bound to follow if His Majesty's Government were to persist in them.

5. Hitherto all British proposals and indeed all discussions have been basically on a United India, the inroads into such unity being confined either (a) to weakening the Centre and giving some sort of Group autonomy or (b) to giving the freedom to certain areas, which are demon-

strably against joining the Union, to create themselves into separate States. The Cabinet Mission considered every aspect of a totally divided India and rejected it. Those considerations remain unchanged and indeed the disorder and violence of recent months add further weight to those considerations.

6. It must be remembered that the British Cabinet plan was accepted by all in India with the sole exception of the Muslim League and even the League had not at all times rejected it. Even today the League is prepared and continues to reap such advantages as it obtained for itself by joining the Interim Government on the basis of acceptance of the plan. The throwing overboard not only of the plan but all its basic conceptions namely the all-India Union and provincial independence to the utmost within that Union appears to be totally at the instance of one party alone in India. The Muslim League vetoes the plan and His Majesty's Government, therefore, throw it overboard. This step can only confirm the conviction widely held that no plan of His Majesty's Government can be accepted or proceeded with in the hope that His Majesty's Government will hold to it.

7. The present proposals virtually scrap the Constituent Assembly which includes all elements excepting the Muslim League, and deprive the Constituent Assembly of its essential character and reduces it to a body for preparing a scheme for the Union which these proposals negative.

8. This involves a complete going back by His Majesty's Government on its previous decisions in that (a) it throws overboard the Cabinet plan or at any rate its basic conception, (b) it violates its repeated pledge that it will not permit one party to exercise a veto, (c) it scraps all that has been done under its own scheme and by arrangements made by the Governor-General himself to implement it.

9. It appears to me that the inevitable and obvious consequences of the proposals and the approach in them are (a) to invite the Balkanisation of India, (b) to provoke certain civil conflict and to add to violence and disorder, (c) to a further breakdown of the central authority which alone can prevent the chaos that is growing, (d) to demoralise the army, the police and the Central Services.

10. The proposal that each of the successor States is to conclude independent treaties, presumably with His Majesty's Government also, which follows if the all-India Union is rejected as a basis and sovereignty

reverts to the provinces, is likely to create many "Ulsters" in India.<sup>2</sup> This will be so considered by the people and deeply resented. The consequences of such resentment will be to add to the suspicions that exist and to create an almost unbridgeable gulf between National India and the British people in the future. The "Ulsters" will be looked upon as so many British bases on Indian soil, possibly having British garrisons.

11. The approach to the Princes may be logical and consistent with the unfortunate position in respect of paramountcy. It shows, however, an obvious shift of emphasis and is a definite invitation to at least the major States to remain independent kingdoms, presumably as feudatories or allies of Britain. Also it is a definite incitement to them to play off Pakistan against the rest of India. This new emphasis will let loose in the States those forces which our moderate counsels and the hopes of their being part of an Indian Union are keeping somewhat in check. People's organisations everywhere demand union. The Rulers may resist them and will be encouraged to do so by this new emphasis in the proposals. In the States themselves there may well be civil war.

12. The proposals in respect of the Indian States also reverse the approach in the Cabinet plan wherein it is obviously indicated that the all-India Union is a Union of States as well, though their union under one Centre must be by voluntary accession. Machinery for this was provided in the Negotiating Committee.

13. The acquiescence on our side to the split-up of certain areas, which are predominantly League in their loyalty, was in no wise an acquiescence in throwing overboard the all-India basis of future settlement. It was only a stretching of the Cabinet plan to make opting out operable now and an adhesion to our oft-repeated policy that we do not wish to coerce any part of India. Further the partition of provinces to which we agreed also was for the same reasons, and we hold that such partition is consistent with an all-India Union of both separated parts with the retention of separate identities. If so desired by these parts they could go out of the Union.

2 According to the proposal negotiations were to be initiated on administrative consequences of any partition that might be decided upon between the representatives of prospective successor authorities about all subjects now dealt with by the Central Government including Defence, Finance and Communications, and between different successor authorities and H M G. for treaties in regard to matters arising out of the transfer of power. In the case of the provinces that might be partitioned negotiations were to be initiated in regard to the administration of all provincial subjects including a division of assets and liabilities.

14. It follows, therefore, and this has to be emphasised as His Majesty's Government appears to imply that we have acquiesced in a rejection of the Cabinet plan and in making the Union a later step by self-determination. We have not agreed to anything of the kind and any step that we have taken, often against our will and against the presence of national feeling in India, is to accept more and more completely the Cabinet plan which provides for the basic all-India Union.

15. It is difficult to go into the details of the proposals in the time available and within the compass of a note. But I might mention that the proposal about the so-called self-determination about Baluchistan seems to me to be preposterous. It leaves the future of that province to one man chosen by a group of Sardars and nominated persons who obviously represent a vested semi-feudal element. Baluchistan has an importance also as a strategic frontier of India and its future cannot be dealt with in this partial and casual manner.

16. If Assam has to surrender a part to Bengal, and we are not opposed to this if the people concerned so wish, it stands to reason that some such procedure is equally applicable to parts of Sind.

17. The proposals about the North-West Frontier Province in various forms have been repeatedly discussed by us and I have pointed out to you our strong objection to anything which places a premium on violence and may well invite civil war. We have agreed that the Frontier Province, like other areas, should be given full opportunity to express its own opinion about the future. But this must be done at the proper time and in the proper context in common with other parts of India. Otherwise that assessment of opinion itself may be defeated apart from other consequences. In effect the present proposal implies a decision by His Majesty's Government that the province must reverse or at least be given an opportunity to reverse its present decision which is to remain in the Constituent Assembly. The sole reason for this appears to be the violence and rapine carried out recently in the province by adherents of the Muslim League or others. That violence has not stopped despite Mr. Jinnah's appeal.<sup>3</sup> This may mean that the violent elements are not in control of the League or that the League leaders are not anxious to stop them. The proposal about the Frontier spotlights the province and proceeds on the assumption that extra-constitutional violence

3. On 7 May 1947 speaking on the situation in the N.W.F.P. Jinnah had appealed to every Muslim especially Leaguers "to do all in their power to remain peaceful"

can declare null and void previous and recent decisions arrived at by constitutional procedure.

18. In regard to the treaties with the tribes of the Frontier, these are presumably with the Government of India<sup>4</sup> We recognise the independence of the tribes and their freedom to make treaties as they like. But even in the case of a properly constituted State on the frontiers of a country and integral to its defence and territorial integrity, the alliance of such a State with another party is recognised as being the concern of the given State with which it has been associated. In the present case this would be India. To give public assurance to the tribes that they can have treaties with whomsoever they like is to invite them to profit by internal difficulties in India and also to create a situation in the Indian frontier which menaces India as well as neighbouring areas in Asia. The Tribal and Frontier areas have been maintained by the expenditure of vast amounts of money from all-India because of strategic and other reasons Further, if the North-West Frontier Province remains with the Union, an alliance between the Tribal Areas and another State will create grave difficulties for the North-West Frontier Province and India as a whole.

19. His Majesty's Government wishes to declare that the sole purpose of the procedure indicated in the proposals is to ascertain the wishes of the people of India and to transfer power with the least possible dislocation. These purposes will not be advanced or even achieved by the proposals. As I have indicated above, the proposals will encourage chaos and disorder and the belief that violence pays will prevent any proper assessment of opinion. Before the people choose they must have a proper picture as to what they are to choose. Two or three vague proposals without this clear background will produce confusion and may share the character of merely demagogic appeals. The transfer of power, instead of being made without dislocation, will be obstructed by violence, by a mass of complications, and by the weakness of the Central Government and its organs.

20. If there is to be any genuine assessment of opinion, the only practicable way is for two constitutions, two appeals and two prospects to be placed before the people. This means that (a) the Constituent Assembly must proceed with the constitution-making on the basis of an

<sup>4</sup> The proposal read. "Fresh agreements with tribes of the N.W. Frontier of India will have to be negotiated by appropriate successor authorities."

all-India Union with full freedom for provinces and effective guarantees for all, (b) equally the League can prepare its own schemes and present its own proposals on an equal level, (c) the two constitutions may be presented to all the provinces of India on a plebiscite basis on such terms as are agreed upon.

21. Until these decisions are made, the Government of India must remain as one. In view of impending British withdrawal, the Coalition forming the Central Government must be a Cabinet with joint responsibility based upon full Dominion autonomy. It may be made clear that the Central Government will not take any steps to prejudice self-determination or subsequent partition and such other guarantees as are necessary may also be given so as to assure the League in regard to certain agreed matters. It may, for instance, be stated that in regard to certain questions they should not be decided by a mere majority in the Cabinet. Some machinery for adjudication in regard to these questions can be set up.

22. This has become a very long note hastily prepared and yet it has not dealt fully with all the aspects of the problem. As I have said above, the fullest consideration by all concerned is necessary before any commitments can be made. It is obvious that there can be no imposed solutions of our problems and any attempt to do so will lead to further difficulty. Whatever the views of my colleagues might be in regard to various details of the proposals, I have no doubt that their main reaction will be as I have indicated above. That is that they cannot accept these proposals and they are not prepared to acquiesce in the throwing overboard of the basic all-India Union or to accept the theory of provinces being initially independent successor States.

## 26. Minutes of the Thirteenth Miscellaneous Meeting of the Viceroy<sup>1</sup>

Pandit Nehru said that when Congress referred to the partition of the Punjab, they had not gone into the question in any great detail.<sup>2</sup> They agreed that the rough line of demarcation must be between Muslim and non-Muslim majority areas. They agreed that landed property was not on a basis which could be proceeded upon, but there were Sikh shrines in some of the predominantly Muslim areas. This point should also be borne in mind.

Sir Evan Jenkins<sup>3</sup> said that it would be very difficult to take this point into consideration when deciding on boundaries....

Pandit Nehru then raised the case of the Gurdaspur district, where the population was almost exactly divided between Muslims and non-Muslims.<sup>4</sup> He asked whether it would not be possible to divide this district, even for the purposes of a notional partition. Sir Evan Jenkins said that he did not consider that this would be possible. The Muslims were fairly equally mixed throughout the district.

Pandit Nehru said that another possibility would be that Hindu and Sikh representatives from Gurdaspur could vote with the representatives of Eastern Punjab and the Muslims with those of Western Punjab.

The Viceroy said that he was in favour of making some such gesture to the Sikhs. Perhaps a clause could be included in the draft announcement to the effect that any districts where the population was so evenly divided that there was less than 1% difference in the number of Muslims and non-Muslims—for example in Gurdaspur—the representatives

1. Held at Simla on 11 May 1947. Extracts *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 10, pp. 759-762.

2 At the commencement of the meeting Mountbatten had said that as he understood it the Congress support to the demand of the Sikhs for the partition of the Punjab was based on the principle that "no districts in which non-Muslims predominated should go to Pakistan." Nehru agreed that "this was the rough basis of Congress's support." Mountbatten then said that "for notional partition for voting purposes" it would be necessary to work on the basis of Muslim and non-Muslim districts but the greatest snag was the vested interests of the Sikhs who were prepared for war.

3. Evan Meredith Jenkins (b 1896), joined Indian Civil Service 1920, Chief Commissioner, Delhi, 1937; Secretary, Department of Supply, 1940-43; Private Secretary to the Viceroy and Secretary to the Governor-General (Personal), 1943-45; Governor of the Punjab, 1946-47

4 Out of a total population of 1,153,511 in Gurdaspur district, the Muslims had a majority of twenty six thousand over the non-Muslims

should be divided for voting purposes as suggested by Pandit Nehru. Sir Evan Jenkins said that he would agree to such a suggestion so long as the general plan was accepted by the party leaders.

The Viceroy explained to Pandit Nehru that orders had been given for one Division less one Brigade to move from Poona to the partition area of the Punjab in time to be in position before the announcement was made. He said that he considered this step to be sad but necessary. Pandit Nehru indicated assent with this latter remark.

Pandit Nehru asked Sir Evan Jenkins whether he had any information that arms were being smuggled into the Punjab from abroad. Sir Evan Jenkins stated that he knew of no reports of arms coming in from foreign countries. However, a certain amount had been brought in from the Frontier; and the authorities were searching freely. Pandit Nehru explained that he had received information from London concerning the buying of arms from the Continent and Iraq. He asked whether Sir Evan Jenkins considered that any Indian States were playing a part in this buying of arms. Sir Evan Jenkins replied that they were not doing so officially at any rate.

Pandit Nehru asked Sir Evan Jenkins whether he thought that, if it was sufficiently realised by the Muslim League that the grant of Pakistan was dependent upon the partition of the Punjab, they would react against Pakistan. Sir Evan Jenkins replied that there might be a split of a kind in the ranks of the Muslim League but he did not know how deep this would go....

The Viceroy explained that he had spoken to Pandit Nehru before the meeting concerning the possible rejection of the plan in the draft announcement. He had told Pandit Nehru that if the Muslim League did not accept it, the alternative to be put before them would be the demission of power to an united India on a Dominion Status basis, and on the understanding that there would be a general election which would allow Mr. Jinnah to form his Pakistan later. The Viceroy stated that Pandit Nehru had told him that Congress would prefer the alternative plan. But he (the Viceroy) very much doubted if the HMG would allow him to impose it if Mr. Jinnah accepted the plan in the draft announcement. He (the Viceroy) said that they would have voted on every count. He (the Viceroy) said that they would not consider the British Government as responsible for the plan. But he (the Viceroy) added that the All-India Muslim League would not accept the Viceroy's suggestion that they should accept the plan as it was, and that they would demand a general election.

Pandit Nehru agreed with this last point. He said that it was only human nature that it should be so. He pointed out that giving in to Mr. Jinnah in the past had not led to agreement but to further demands. The alternatives were settlement and conflict. So far there had not been an element of compulsion one way or the other. If the Indian leaders were left to deal with each other without outside interference, there would be a strong compulsion to come to terms.

The Viceroy said that Pandit Nehru had stated that if power was demitted to the Interim Government on a Dominion Status basis, Congress would publicly announce safeguards for the Muslim League. Assistance would be given to those areas who did not want to stay in the Union of India to get out. Assistance would be given towards the setting up of Pakistan if this was wanted. But these safeguards were based on Congress's stated word. Mr. Jinnah would surely not accept this.

Pandit Nehru said that he believed that once these safeguards were publicly announced, it would be physically impossible to go against them.

The Viceroy said that Pandit Nehru had also stressed to him that the present proposed timetable was too much of a rush.

The postponement of the present programme, whereby the Announcement would be made on 22nd May at the latest, was then discussed, and it was decided to postpone the meeting with Indian leaders until 2nd June....

Pandit Nehru said that he thought the Congress Working Committee should meet some days earlier than the Viceroy's meeting of the five Indian leaders so as to consider the principles of the plan. The Viceroy told Pandit Nehru that he did not consider that this would be desirable.

## 27. Minutes of the Fourteenth Miscellaneous Meeting of the Viceroy<sup>1</sup>

The Viceroy said that he had that morning received a letter from Pandit Nehru<sup>2</sup> containing very considerable objections to the plan as contained

1 Simla, 11 May 1947 Extracts. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 10, pp 762-766.

2. See *ante*, item 24

in the Draft Announcement, a copy of which he had shown to Pandit Nehru the previous night. He explained that he had been under the impression that there had been a large measure of agreement by both sides to this plan. Mr. Jinnah had never actually accepted it but had implied acceptance. The views of Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel, Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan had been obtained at a series of meetings with the Viceroy, Lord Ismay, Sir Eric Mievile and Mr. Abell. Sir Eric Mievile had then taken the draft<sup>3</sup> of the plan round to Pandit Nehru and to Mr. Jinnah. The present draft did not differ in essentials from that.

Pandit Nehru claimed that the draft which Sir Eric Mievile had shown him had been rough; that it had dealt mainly with the partition of Bengal and the Punjab, and that it had consisted of only one-and-a-half pages. He stated that he had at that time criticised certain parts of the draft, particularly in connection with Baluchistan and the N.W.F.P.<sup>4</sup>

Sir Eric Mievile agreed with this latter point but he made it absolutely clear that the draft which he had shown Pandit Nehru was the full draft of the whole plan.

The Viceroy went on to say that, after Pandit Nehru and Mr. Jinnah had seen the draft announcement, Lord Ismay had gone to London with instructions to say that nothing had been agreed to in writing by the Indian leaders, but that the draft represented in his (the Viceroy's) considered opinion what the leaders had implied that they would accept. Therefore, he had been extremely surprised at receiving Pandit Nehru's letter that morning.

Pandit Nehru said that, as well as the letter, he had written a long note reasserting his immediate reactions.<sup>5</sup> He handed this note to the Viceroy. He explained that he had to speak for his colleagues and the Congress organisation. The main point which he had mentioned in this note was that the whole background of the draft announcement was very different from what he had imagined. He had thought that provinces were going to be asked to express their wishes on a slight variation of the Cabinet Mission's plan. This would start on the basis of a Union of India, including the States. In the Cabinet Mission's plan reference had been made to provinces being able to opt out from one group to another at a later stage. Congress had now stated the principle of "no compulsion" and agreed any province which wished to could opt out of the Union completely. But in the present draft of the announcement the con-

3. The reference is presumably to the draft announcement dated 30 April 1947 printed in *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. 10, pp. 496-499.

4. See *ante*, item 15.

5. See *ante*, item 25.

ception was not so much of a Union of India but of a large number of successor States to which theoretically power would be transferred, and which would then join one group or another. This was a fundamental departure from the basis of the Cabinet Mission's plan. The approach was different and this became even more evident in regard to the States. Although what was said was not basically different to what had been said before, the emphasis was such that it became almost an invitation to the States to keep out and await future developments. His reading of the draft announcement led him to think that it would encourage people to realise that India was being balkanised. The procedure appeared to be first separation, then a request to join up again. The previous process had been the opposite—first a request for unity and then the option to secede.

Pandit Nehru went on to say that in the plan in the draft announcement the Cabinet Mission's plan was being completely thrown away; and there was an extension in some parts of what had been said in H M.G.'s statement of the 20th February. He gave his opinion that this process of throwing away what had been previously said should be carried out as little as possible. It gave rise to the idea that there was nothing final in H M G.'s announcements and that H M G. always changed their minds under pressure. It encouraged chaotic tendencies. The Cabinet Mission's plan had brought about a certain definiteness; the statement of February 20th had been more definite and had been well received. This present plan would upset everything and produce the idea that there were no assurances of what was going to happen. The Constituent Assembly was referred to in it in a manner which was likely to reduce its importance in the scheme of things.

The Viceroy said that he agreed that nothing should be done to encourage States to stand out independently, but there were some which were geographically and ethnically almost bound to throw in their lot with Pakistan. The only new element which he was trying to introduce was that a few could, if they so wished, go into Pakistan.

Pandit Nehru said that the people of almost every State had openly declared in favour of joining the Union of India. He asked what would happen if Hyderabad wanted to join Pakistan.

The Viceroy then asked Pandit Nehru for his views on the procedure whereby Bengal would be given a chance of remaining united and independent. He pointed out that, on the basis of application of the *cum* principle, the chance of independence was, in the present draft, being given to other provinces also.

Pandit Nehru said that it was obvious that the division of Bengal was harmful from many points of view, but exactly the *cum* argument

applied to the cutting off of Bengal from India. Calcutta was the port for the whole of Northern India; if Bengal was independent Calcutta would wither away.

Pandit Nehru went on to say that he considered that there had been quite enough rioting in Bengal without the suggestion that the province should be partitioned; however Congress had been forced to recommend partition. He personally hoped that the conception of partition would recede. He would be willing to consider special arrangements with Bengal and the Punjab but the feeling of the people in Western Bengal was an important factor. The situation in Bengal had become intolerable for them. There was not likely to be more than one per cent of non-Muslims who would agree to independence; Calcutta had been half ruined in the last six months.

Pandit Nehru then referred to the proposed arrangements in the draft announcement for ascertaining the will of the people of Baluchistan. He said that he considered it amazing that one man, elected by a number of semi-feudal chiefs, should decide the fate of the province. He considered that Baluchistan should not be asked to make a choice, until the picture in the rest of India was clear. There were only 300,000 inhabitants of Baluchistan, and a plebiscite might be organised.

The Viceroy emphasised that if an early transfer of power were to take place it would be out of the question to leave the fate of any parts of India undecided.

Pandit Nehru said he agreed that the question must be decided before any final decision was made; some method or other would have to be devised, but the future of Baluchistan raised many strategic problems. The way at present envisaged was a very casual way of dealing with an important Frontier area. Baluchistan's decision was bound to be influenced by the decision in the N.W.F.P. He said that he could not himself suggest an immediate answer as to the best method of finding out the will of the people in Baluchistan, and proposed that Sir B.N. Rau should be consulted.

The Viceroy asked Pandit Nehru whether he agreed to the present wording of the procedure for the N.W.F.P. Pandit Nehru asked when the proposed referendum there was likely to occur. Menon replied that the other processes on which it was dependent would probably be complete within two months; but Pandit Nehru himself said that he thought they could be finished in June.

The Viceroy said that he was sure, that if no referendum was held there would be a civil war in the N.W.F.P. Pandit Nehru said that he agreed that there should be a referendum before the demission of power.

Pandit Nehru then gave an outline of how he considered the plan

should be reframed in order to make it more acceptable to Congress. He argued that the Cabinet Mission's plan was not dead except to those who had rejected it. The Constituent Assembly was functioning except for a few provinces, the majority of whose elected representatives had not taken their seats and which could, therefore, be considered not to have adhered to it. It was these provinces which must now be given an opportunity of choosing what to do. They were Sind, the Punjab and Bengal, where there was a demand for partition; and the district of Sylhet, which was predominantly Muslim. He again mentioned the question of the non-Muslim area in Sind.

The Viceroy asked Pandit Nehru whether, if he could get the draft announcement reframed along the lines he wanted, he and the Congress Working Committee would agree to it. Pandit Nehru replied that he wanted to help the Viceroy, but "things that emerged from London were so peculiar." He suggested that instead of vague and general talk there should be something more definite.

The Viceroy asked whether Pandit Nehru could see any objection to the use of the word "Pakistan". Pandit Nehru replied that this was a colloquial word which had no meaning; even the Muslim League had not used it in resolutions.

Pandit Nehru asked whether, when an early transfer of power on a Dominion Status basis was referred to, it was intended that complete power should be transferred. What was intended in connection with the army?

The Viceroy said that the British army would be withdrawn as quickly as possible. With this principle Pandit Nehru agreed.

The Viceroy said that, since a new sovereign State was to be set up, from the territories of which about thirty per cent of the present army came, there would have to be an interim period during which the armed forces would be run by a Defence Council.

Pandit Nehru said that the proportion was rather less than thirty per cent. He agreed that there should be a joint Defence Council, but gave his opinion that it should be concerned with two matters only—the process of division and measures to ensure that the army was not unfairly used by either side. He felt that the scope of the Defence Council should definitely be limited to these two subjects; otherwise the whole development and organisation of the army would be compromised.



WITH LORD AND LADY MOUNTBATTEN AT SIMLA, MAY 1947



WITH THE VICEROY'S PARTY AT SIMLA, MAY 1947

## 28. At Simla<sup>1</sup>

On the 10th May night I was given some idea of the draft proposals as they had been sent to London. I considered them that night and early next morning I dictated a long note.<sup>2</sup> As there was delay in typing this note and events were marching fast, I sent a brief hand-written letter to Lord Mountbatten.<sup>3</sup> I kept no copy of this. This letter produced an immediate impression and led to a talk. Later I handed over to Mountbatten the typewritten note dt 11.5.

On the 11th afternoon it was decided to postpone the Conference called for May 17 to June 2nd.<sup>4</sup>

1. An undated note JN Collection

2. See *ante*, item 25

3. See *ante*, item 24

4. It was officially announced on 11 May 1947 that the conference was being postponed on account of the impending recess of the British Parliament from 23 May to 2 June

## 29. To Mahatma Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
12.5.47

Dear Bapu,

Owing to various developments the Working Committee has now been fixed for May 31st. Mountbatten intends to see some of us plus Jinnah &c. on June 2nd presumably to place before us some tentative proposals of the British Government

As you know the situation is extraordinarily delicate and complicated and we stand on the verge of major conflicts in north India and possibly Bengal. In these circumstances we have to give the most earnest consideration to it. Your presence is therefore essential and I hope you will be able to come here as early as is convenient to you. The more time we have the better. I hope you will arrive here by the 25th. If you will be able to come here as early as is convenient to you The more

1 Pyarelal Papers

the W.C. meets on the 31st May its members will anyhow be here when you come.

I would like you to invite Jayaprakash to Delhi also about that time so that we can discuss Congress matters with him. He is likely to be in Patna soon

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

### 30. Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
12 May 1947

Mahatama Gandhi  
Sodepur

Owing other developments Working Committee meeting postponed Saturday May thirtyfirst. However would like you come here some days earlier for consultation.

Jawaharlal  
Kripalani

1. AICC File No G-30/1946-48, p 114, N M M L

### 31. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
13 May 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

May I suggest to you that in any conferences to which party leaders are invited, the President<sup>2</sup> of the Congress should also be invited? He represents the Congress formally and officially. Others may be prominent Congressmen, but they have other capacities also and cannot be said to represent Congress formally. If the Congress President is not invited on such occasions, certain misapprehensions arise in the public mind and needless difficulties are created

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 10, p 800

2 J B. Kripalani

32. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
13 May, 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

I promised to send you a copy of the statement issued by the Congress Working Committee soon after the declaration of war in September 1939.<sup>2</sup> I am now sending a small book<sup>3</sup> containing a number of early Congress resolutions and statements. This yellow book gives the Working Committee's statement of September 14th 1939 at page 14. I should like to draw your special attention to this. During the war period there were of course many other resolutions and statements which would explain the policy of the Congress as it developed during those tragic days. I do not propose to weary you by asking you to read these. But the last resolution, known as the Quit India Resolution passed on the 8th August 1942, is worth reading.<sup>4</sup> It was this resolution that led to our immediate arrest on August 9th. This is given at page 10 of *Congress Bulletin* dated 1st November 1945.

There is some account of the development of Congress policy during these years in my book *The Discovery of India* but, busy as you are, I do not want to add to your burdens

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. File No 32(46)/48-PMS

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol 10, pp 122-138.

3. *Congress & War Crisis*, published by AICC from Allahabad

4. See *Selected Works*, Vol 12, pp 436-453.

33. To Syama Prasad Mookerjee<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
14th May 1947

My dear Dr. Mookerjee,

I have your letter of the 11th May. All the considerations that you have

1 File No 7(2)-PS/47-PMS

mentioned have been before us.<sup>2</sup> Naturally I cannot say with any definiteness what is going to happen. I do not personally appreciate at all the idea of a sovereign Bengal unconnected with the Union.

Any notional division of the province for the purpose of deciding about the future must necessarily be based on some simple rule which presumably is related to the census figures of population.<sup>3</sup> Final boundaries can only be settled by a Boundary Commission.

As you must know, the date of the so-called Conference has been postponed to the 2nd June. The Congress Working Committee is meeting on the 31st May in Delhi. I think it will be advantageous if you could be in Delhi round about that time. In any event you will probably have to come up for the meeting of the Constituent Assembly Union Principles Committee.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. S.P. Mookerjee reported that Sarat Chandra Bose was negotiating with Suhrawardy for the creation of a sovereign Bengal. He feared that "even if a loose centre as contemplated under the Cabinet Mission Scheme is established, we shall have no safety whatsoever", and demanded the division of Bengal into two provinces irrespective of the creation of Pakistan
3. Mookerjee wanted that any provisional boundary of the new province of West Bengal should include Burdwan, Presidency divisions, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling

#### 34. To Asaf Ali<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
14th May 1947

My dear Asaf,

I have to apologise to you again for the delay in acknowledging your letters. The last came through Betty together with a note of her own giving me your message. I have also received the two photographs which you have sent me. Both are good and I am grateful to you for having sent them.

1. J.N. Collection.

2. I have received also the report on India by Westmore Willcox<sup>2</sup> which you have sent and which is interesting though completely out of date. As regards the suggested loan by U.S.A. to India, I have already written to Willcox that the conditions he wanted to attach to it are not likely to be accepted here. We are going to permit no control of our industry by an outside agency though we shall gladly cooperate on terms of mutual advantage with outsiders. There is a possibility of a loan from the U.S.A. being considered in the future as between Governments. But for the present this matter need not be raised. There is something to be said in connecting this loan with Sterling Balances. This might release the stress on England and give us dollar resources.

3. Willcox's whole report, of course, deals with a situation that is past. The formation of the Interim Government put an end to the conditions that prevailed in India when Willcox was here. Probably the next few months will alter the situation still further. We must wait till then and see how matters stand before we make any move in this direction.

4. As you must know, on June 2nd we are supposed to be meeting the Viceroy to learn from him what the tentative proposals of the British Government are in regard to further changes. No proposal of the British Government has much validity unless it is accepted by us. I cannot say now exactly what these proposals are likely to be and what our reactions to them will be. Mountbatten's approach is friendly and he wants to go ahead fast. But the India Office crowd and the British Cabinet still move in the old grooves. They are completely out of touch with recent developments in India, but they consider themselves experts who can lay down the law, especially Stafford Cripps.

5. The British Cabinet's Scheme of May 16th has, in fact, been functioning so far as we are concerned. The Constituent Assembly has been meeting and will, I hope, finish its work within a few months. Nevertheless, the Muslim League's boycott has prevented the Scheme from coming into full operation.

6. Meanwhile the situation in northern India and in Bengal is tense and volcanic. There is talk all round of civil conflict on a big scale and arms are being smuggled and manufactured. With this background some little spark may lead to a big blaze.

<sup>2</sup> (1894-1971), Chief of Foreign Economic Administration Mission to India, 1945-46.

7. Because of all this we came to the regrettable conclusion that it is better to offer a division of those parts that want to go away from the Union of India. This inevitably involves a partition of Bengal and Punjab. There is at present a tremendous demand for this partition from the Hindus and Sikhs and this is being thoroughly opposed by the Muslim Leaguers. It is a curious reversal of the previous position. Suhrawardy goes about proclaiming that Bengal is one Nation. So also Shaukat Hayat Khan and Feroz Khan Noon declare that the Punjabis are one and cannot be separated. The two-nation theory evidently does not work in Bengal and Punjab.

8 I imagine that one of the alternative proposals of the Viceroy will be to give the right to provinces or parts of provinces to opt out of the Union or rather the proposed Union. Some machinery will be devised for this process which will enable Bengal and Punjab to be divided if the parts so desire it. Whether one likes this or not, this does give a large measure of self-determination to the people concerned. The Muslim Leaguers are for the first time up against the difficulty of having to choose between a truncated Pakistan with Bengal and Punjab divided and no Pakistan at all, that is joining the Union of India on the Cabinet plan basis.

9. I imagine that the former course is likely to be adopted whether the Muslim League agrees to do so or not, that is to say if they reject finally, as they are very likely to do, the Cabinet Mission plan. Once these decisions are made, they will be given effect to firmly.

10. There is also some talk of a transfer of power on the Dominion basis as far as possible, that is to say long before June 1948. The Dominion basis will, of course, only last till June 1948 and it will be up to us to lay down the terms of our relationship with England then. This must be on the basis of an Indian Republic though we may continue to have close contacts in many ways with England and the British Commonwealth of Nations. Much will depend on what happens in the course of the next year.

11. I have given you some brief idea of the possible shape of things to come, but you must appreciate that this is all vague and uncertain and you should keep it to yourself. The overriding factor today is the violence in the air and the possibility of a big-scale conflict in northern India. Whatever happens, we shall face it firmly.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

35. To Mahatma Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

16 May 1947

You must be following the rapid developments taking place here. Mountbatten is going to London on Sunday next<sup>2</sup> and is likely to be away for nearly two weeks. I understand you intend arriving here on the 25th. Vallabhbhai and I feel that it would be a very good thing if you would come to Mussoorie for a few days before coming to Delhi. This would suit us and it would also no doubt give you a few days of rest. Nothing much is likely to happen in Delhi until the Viceroy returns. I was in any event thinking of going to Mussoorie for a few days. . . .<sup>3</sup> If you could come to Mussoorie I could stay on a few days longer. . . .<sup>4</sup> Vallabhbhai is also going to Mussoorie.

1 Mahatma Gandhi—*The Last Phase*, Vol II, (Ahmedabad, 1958), p 199  
The full text is not available.

2 Mountbatten left for London on 18 May 1947 to secure the British Cabinet's approval of the revised draft announcement.

3&4. Omission in the source

36. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
16 May 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

I am trying to arrange for Krishna Menon to leave for London as soon as possible. I understand that there is a B.O.A.C. plane going tomorrow. I do not know yet whether accommodation in this plane will be available or not Krishna Menon could consult our High Commissioner in

1 *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 10, pp 843-844

London as well as the Secretary of State for India<sup>2</sup> in regard to his proposal to some kind of an Ambassador for various countries in Europe with his Headquarters in 'London. These discussions will enable him to present a more detailed and worked-out scheme which can be considered by the Cabinet here.

2. I have read the draft you gave me.<sup>3</sup> There are some changes that I should like to suggest to you when we meet. Some of these changes are in the nature of re-drafting with a variation of approach or emphasis. There is one matter, however, which has not so far been mentioned between us but which seems to me is deserving of clarification. It is really consequential to what is proposed to be done

3. This relates to clause 7 of Paragraph 19 of the Cabinet Mission's plan of May 16, 1946. This clause 7 states that any resolution in the Union Constituent Assembly raising any major communal issue shall require a majority of the representatives present and voting of each of the two major communities. This clause had some meaning in the old context of the Union Constituent Assembly comprising all the provinces. But if there is to be a partition and some provinces or parts of provinces go out, then the clause ceases to have significance. Of course there will be every provision for the protection of minority rights in the constitution. The Constituent Assembly has already considered and passed many of these provisions. Apart from this, the procedure should be ordinary democratic procedure and it should not be open to a very small number of persons to hold up the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly on what may be considered a major communal issue. As I have said above,

2 William Francis Hare, fifth Earl of Listowel (b 1906); Secretary of State for India, April-August 1947; Secretary of State for Burma, 1947-January 1948, Minister of State for Colonial Affairs, 1948-50; Joint Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries, 1950-51; Governor-General of Ghana, 1957-60, Chairman of Committees, House of Lords, 1965-76; author of *The Values of Life* and *A Critical History of Modern Aesthetics*.

3 This revised draft announcement differed with the earlier draft announcement in that it merely said that any constitution framed by the existing Constituent Assembly would not apply to those parts which were unwilling to accept it. It also laid down a procedure to ascertain the wishes of the people of such areas whether they would like to frame their constitution in the existing Constituent Assembly or in a new and separate Constituent Assembly. The earlier draft announcement (see *ante*, item 24, fn 2) had laid down that "different parts" of India would decide whether their constitutions would be framed in the existing Constituent Assembly or jointly with other parts of India or separately. For the full text of the revised draft announcement see *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. 10, pp 808-812

there is no point in this clause after some kind of a partition has been made. I am not trying to get out of any part of the Cabinet Mission's Scheme. I wish to point out merely a necessary consequence of the other changes proposed<sup>4</sup>

4. There is one other small matter. In Sylhet I think there should be some provision for a referendum at some stage or other. This would be fair to all parties concerned and in view of the major change involved and the balance of population there, it would be desirable to have a final verdict from the people concerned<sup>5</sup>

5. As previously pointed out, a small change would be necessary in regard to a predominantly Hindu Rajput area in Sind.<sup>6</sup>

6. I take it that decisions in regard to Sylhet and Baluchistan would be taken after the main decisions in Bengal and Punjab have been taken. They would partly be influenced by the latter decisions.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

Krishna Menon will be leaving tomorrow noon by B.O.A.C. and reaching London on Monday morning at 7 a.m.

4. Mountbatten, in his reply on 16 May 1947, drew Nehru's attention to paragraph 20 of the draft announcement wherein it was stated that the existing Constituent Assembly and the new Constituent Assembly would be free to frame their own rules and thought that it covered the point mentioned by Nehru

5 Mountbatten said he would look into this point but thought that a referendum for Sylhet "may prove to be unnecessary in the light of the decision which Bengal may take"

6 Mountbatten replied: "I remember the point you raise about the predominantly Hindu area in the Sind, and the possibility of its transfer to Jodhpur, I do not think, however, that this is a matter for mentioning in the main statement, since it would open the way for Muslim League claims in other parts, which they have hinted at"

### 37. Note on the British Government's Revised Draft Announcement<sup>1</sup>

1. The Congress fully accepted the Cabinet Mission's Scheme of May 16, 1946, and has since acted in accordance with its provisions. We stand by the Scheme still and we think that this should continue to be the basis of any change in the future. The Interim Government itself is an outcome of this Scheme.
2. While the Cabinet Mission's Scheme of May 16th has been functioning and been acted upon, it is true that the Muslim League has kept away from it. For the sake of a settlement with the League we are prepared to accept variations of the Cabinet Mission's Scheme though it must be understood that fundamentally that Scheme continues to function.
3. It is in this context that we have considered the plan which H.M.G. propose to put forward. This plan, as we understand it, is a continuation of the Cabinet Mission's Scheme with suitable variations to fit in with the existing situation and in order to bring about an abiding settlement. We accept this plan generally but our acceptance is strictly subject to the other parties agreeing to it as a final settlement and that no further claims are put forward.
4. In the event of the Muslim League not agreeing to this plan, we must adhere strictly to the Cabinet Mission's Scheme of May 16, 1946, under which the Interim Government was formed. In this Interim Government there is no place for those who finally reject the Cabinet Mission's Scheme.
5. In accepting generally the plan which H.M.G. propose to put forward, we should like to point out that in the event of the various partitions mentioned in that plan taking place, it follows that the clause in the Cabinet Mission's Scheme in paragraph 19 dealing with major communal matters has no further significance.
6. We would like the following variations made in the draft of the plan. These do not affect the essential nature and purpose of the plan.

1 New Delhi, 16 May 1947 *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 10, pp 855-857

(a) Paragraph 1<sup>2</sup> should read as follows: "On February 20, 1947, H.M.G. announced their intention of transferring power in British India to Indian hands by June 1948 H M.G had hoped that it would be possible for the major parties to cooperate in working out the Cabinet Mission's Scheme of May 16, 1946, and evolve for India a constitution acceptable to all concerned This hope has not yet been fulfilled H.M.G. are, therefore, faced with the task of making further efforts to implement their intention of transferring power including such variations of the Scheme of May 16th and the adjustments consequent to them as would enable the major parties to cooperate in a peaceful transfer of power."

(b) Paragraph 3. The reference to agreement with political leaders would be justified if there is a final settlement and all parties agree.<sup>3</sup>

(c) Paragraph 4 should run thus "It is not the intention of H M.G. to interrupt the work of the existing Constituent Assembly, and H.M.G. trust that, as a consequence of this announcement, the Muslim League representatives of those provinces, a majority of whose representatives are already participating in it, will now take their due share in its labours."<sup>4</sup> The rest of the paragraph will remain as drafted.

(d) Paragraph 7 is by no means clear.<sup>5</sup> We do not object to it, but as drafted it may create all manner of difficulties

2. Paragraph 1 read "On Feb 20th 1947, H M.G announced their intention of transferring power in British India to Indian hands by June 1948 H M.G had hoped it would be possible for the major parties to co-operate on the basis of the Cabinet Mission's Plan of May 16th, 1946, and evolve for India a constitution acceptable to all concerned This hope has not in the event been fulfilled, nor have the political parties in India been able to reach agreement on any alternative plan of their own"
3. The revised draft announcement read "After full consultation and in agreement with political leaders in India, H M G. have decided to adopt for this purpose the plan set out below"
4. The revised draft announcement read "It is not the intention of H M G to interrupt the work of the existing Constituent Assembly in so far as it relates to those provinces a majority of whose representatives are already participating . .and H M G. trust that, as a consequence of this announcement, the Muslim League representatives of those provinces will now take their due share in its labours"
- 5 Referring to Bengal and Punjab where the MLAs were to decide whether or not their provinces would be partitioned, it was stated in paragraph 7 that "Before such a vote takes place, however, it is desirable that the representatives of each province should clearly know what would be the alternative to Partition .. "

(e) Paragraph 9. Who will decide the composition of the Boundary Commission?<sup>6</sup> It should be stated quite clearly that the Boundary Commission will have to take into consideration many other factors also apart from the nature of the population.

(f) Paragraph 11. As stated in this paragraph, the referendum will be held in consultation with the Provincial Government.<sup>7</sup> We cannot answer for the Provincial Government or commit it, but we are prepared to request them to agree to this procedure.

(g) Paragraph 13. There is a reference to the contiguous Muslim majority areas of Districts adjoining Sylhet.<sup>8</sup> This reference seems to be unnecessary. The Boundary Commission will certainly have to take such matters into consideration not only in Assam but also in Sind.

(h) Paragraph 16. This seems to be unnecessary here.<sup>9</sup> We do not object to the idea underlying it, but it will be for us to consider later what is the best form of giving effect to it.

(i) Paragraph 19 We suggest that only the first three lines of this paragraph should remain and the rest should be deleted; further that the following addition be made after "Indian States" in the 3rd line: "as stated in the Cabinet Mission's Scheme of May 16, 1946."<sup>10</sup>

(j) Paragraph 20. In line 8 after "new Constituent Assembly" add "if formed."<sup>11</sup>

- 6 In regard to the partition of Bengal and Punjab it was proposed that a Boundary Commission would be set up for "a more detailed investigation of boundary questions"
- 7 It was stated that in the NWFP a referendum would be held under the aegis of the Governor-General and in consultation with the Provincial Government.
- 8 The revised draft announcement read. "Though Assam is predominantly a non-Muslim Province, the district of Sylhet which is contiguous to Bengal is predominantly Muslim. There has been a demand that in the event of the partition of Bengal, Sylhet should be amalgamated with the Muslim part of Bengal. . . "
- 9 Paragraph 16 read. "The Constituent Assembly (or Assemblies) will also constitute Provisional Authorities to whom power can be transferred"
- 10 Paragraph 19 read "HMG wish to make it clear that the decisions announced above relate only to British India and that their policy towards Indian States remains unchanged. Some of the States are already participating in the deliberations of the existing Constituent Assembly. HMG hope that all the others will join either the existing Constituent Assembly or the new Constituent Assembly."
- 11 In paragraph 20 this sentence read "The existing Constituent Assembly and the new Constituent Assembly will proceed to frame constitutions for their respective territories. . . "

7. We have not seen the appendix giving the list of districts.<sup>12</sup> As we have pointed out previously, the position of the Sikhs in the Punjab is a very difficult one under the scheme and every effort should be made to ease the situation for them. A suggestion was made and apparently accepted that in Gurdaspur District<sup>13</sup> and others similarly situated the Hindu and Sikh representatives should go to the Eastern Punjab group and the Muslim representatives should go to Western Punjab. This may not be very logical, but it approaches somewhat a juster solution. It would be desirable to say something in the course of the document that the Boundary Commission should give due weight to all the factors and considerations advanced by various groups before coming to a decision; further that the notional division is entirely temporary for a particular purpose and no more.

8. There is no mention in the document of the Chittagong Hill areas which are predominantly Hindu and Buddhist. These are Excluded Areas lying to the east of East Bengal. They have nothing in common with Chittagong District or with East Bengal. They will naturally line up with some of the Hindu States to the north of them and possibly with Assam.

9. No mention is also made of other territories like the Andaman Islands. These also will naturally go with the Union of India.

Jawaharlal Nehru

12 The appendix contained a list of the Muslim majority districts of Punjab and Bengal. See *The Transfer of Power*, Vol 10, p 887.

13. In the appendix Gurdaspur District was shown as a Muslim majority district.

### **38. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
17 May 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

V.P. Menon has shown me the latest draft announcement<sup>2</sup> as well as draft proposals<sup>3</sup> for the transfer of power during the interim period. I

1. *The Tranfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 10, pp 866-870

2 Printed in *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. 10, pp 858-860

3 Printed in *The Transfer of Power*, Vol 10, pp 861-862

have made certain comments to him in regard to them. I repeat these points below so that they may be before you in writing for facility of reference.

*Draft Announcement*

*Paragraph 1.* There has been some improvement.<sup>4</sup> But I must say that I dislike the last sentence<sup>5</sup> There is no point in it and it is somewhat of an irritant. As a matter of fact, there has been an agreement between the Congress and H.M G. on the basis of the plan of May 16th as well as their declaration of December 6, 1946. It might be said that all parties in India have accepted and agreed to this with the exception of the Muslim League. To go on laying stress on political parties being unable to reach an agreement is neither fair nor completely correct In any event, it is not a very tactful approach to the problem I still think that the changes I suggested in paragraph 1 would improve it.<sup>6</sup>

*Paragraph 4.* There has been a considerable change in this for the worse. Yesterday we were told that our suggestions had been accepted. Instead of that the whole structure of the sentence at the beginning has been changed laying emphasis on the exception rather than the rule<sup>7</sup> That exception has been dealt with separately later on in the document and there is no need to emphasise it right at the beginning of the paragraph. This emphasis leads to a wrong approach to the problem. It must be remembered that the Constituent Assembly has been functioning on the basis of an agreement with H M G and in accordance with their plan of May 16, 1946. That is the basic theme. In view, however, of certain developments, it is proposed to make certain changes which are enumerated later on Those changes apply ultimately only to the areas deliberately

4 The second sentence was changed as follows: "H M G had hoped that it would be possible for the major parties to cooperate in the working out of the Cabinet Mission's Plan of May 16th, 1946, and evolve for India a constitution acceptable to all concerned"

5. The last sentence read: "This hope has not in the event been fulfilled, nor have the political parties in India been able to reach agreement on any alternative plan of their own"

6 For Nehru's suggestion see the preceding item, para 6(a)

7 The first two sentences as changed read: "With the exception of the provisions made hereafter for Bengal, the Punjab, Assam, Sind, the North-West Frontier Province and British Baluchistan, it is not the intention of H M G to interrupt the work of the existing Constituent Assembly. H M G trust that, as a consequence of this announcement, the Muslim League representatives of those provinces a majority of whose representatives are already participating in it will now take their due share in its labours"

choosing to opt out of the purview of the Constituent Assembly. I suggest, therefore, that the wording I had recommended in my note yesterday for paragraph 4 should be kept.<sup>8</sup> The present wording is not even in conformity with the original draft.

*Paragraph 7.* I fear that there is still lack of clarity. But I do not press this point any more as I have no objection to the intention behind this paragraph.<sup>9</sup>

*Paragraph 9.* In this a reference is made to the demarcation of boundaries of the two parts of the Punjab on the basis of Girdawar circles.<sup>10</sup> I do not know what these circles are. But I am told that our Sikh friends do not approve of this provision.<sup>11</sup>

*Paragraph 13.* I notice the changes made. As there is a reference in this paragraph to "contiguous Muslim majority areas" and districts adjoining Sylhet,<sup>12</sup> I do not see any logic how the same principle might not be borne in mind regarding that part of Sind which adjoins Kutch and Jodhpur. This is the Thar Pakar area which is largely desert, but which contains one town Umarkot. The area is big enough in the map, but is very sparsely populated. I realise the difficulties you pointed out yesterday and I have no wish to press for any addition to the document in regard to this matter. But I hope that you will bear this in mind so that when final changes have to be made this matter should also be considered.

8 See the preceding item, para 6(c).

9 Paragraph 7 which related to Bengal and Punjab read: "Before such a vote takes place, however, it is desirable that the representatives of each Province should clearly know which Constituent Assembly the Province as a whole would join, if they decided to remain united. Therefore, if there is a demand for it, a preliminary joint meeting of all members of each Legislative Assembly (other than Europeans) will be held at which a decision on this issue will be taken."

10 This paragraph stated, among other things, that the Boundary Commission "will be instructed to demarcate the boundaries of the two parts of the Punjab on the basis of ascertaining the contiguous majority areas of Muslims and non-Muslims, down to girdawar circles".

11. In his letter of 17 May 1947 to Nehru, Baldev Singh took exception to the addition of the words "down to Girdawar circles" which, he said, meant that the boundary of partition would go right up to the Sutlej

12 "If the referendum (in Sylhet district) results in favour of amalgamation with Eastern Bengal, a Boundary Commission.. will be set up to demarcate the Muslim majority areas of Sylhet district and contiguous Muslim majority areas of adjoining districts, which will then be transferred to Eastern Bengal "

*Paragraph 16.*<sup>13</sup> End-relating to the Sikhs.<sup>14</sup> This is an addition. I think it is desirable that special reference be made to the Sikhs. But whether this paragraph will please them I rather doubt. The last sentence is not wholly correct. It is, of course, impossible to keep any group together 100 per cent in a scheme of partition. But it must be possible to meet many of the Sikh demands by certain variations of the boundary line. As the paragraph stands, I think it will serve no useful purpose and had better be omitted.

All of us sympathise very greatly with the Sikhs and would like to help them as much as possible in their predicament. But I do not feel competent, in a matter affecting them intimately, to say anything on their behalf or to commit them.

Subject to the remarks I have made above, I am prepared to agree to the draft announcement. My remarks do not relate to any basic provision in the announcement but rather to the wording of it. Naturally my general acceptance to this draft and the proposals contained therein can only be, at this stage, a personal acceptance. I shall place the matter before the Congress Working Committee when they meet, and urge them to accept these basic provisions.

May I, however, make it clear again, as I have done previously on several occasions, that this acceptance is bound up with the acceptance of others also? That is to say, if there is a settlement on this basis, we accept these proposals for the sake of the settlement. If there is no clear settlement then there is no point in our accepting these proposals and in that event we revert to the Cabinet Mission's plan of May 16, 1946.

That plan is, in fact, a kind of an agreement between H.M.G and all others in India except the Muslim League. We would have liked that plan to remain in its entirety. But with a view to a complete settlement of all claims and to the establishment of peaceful conditions, we are prepared to agree to a variation of the plan as suggested in the draft announcement. A real settlement and an abandonment of further claims is an essential part of the scheme. Without this the proposals fall.

13 The source, however, has Paragraph 14 which obviously is a slip for Paragraph 16.

14 Paragraph 16 read "H M G have given long and careful consideration to the position of the Sikhs. The partition of the Punjab, if it takes place as a result of the decisions of Legislative Assembly members, will have the effect of dividing the Sikhs almost equally between the Muslim and non-Muslim areas. As the Sikhs constitute only 13% of the population of the Punjab and are not in a majority in even one district, it has proved impossible to provide a separate State for them. The only way the Sikhs could be kept together would be to avoid the partition of the Punjab."

*Proposals for Transfer of Power during the Interim Period<sup>15</sup>*

It is essential that there should be a transfer of power by convention or agreement simultaneously with these proposals. The present position is an intolerable one when there is no real responsibility anywhere and the situation deteriorates rapidly. If the proposals in the draft announcement are agreed to, then no further apprehension should remain in the minds of the Muslim League about any abuse of power or authority against them. In order, however, to remove any lingering apprehension, it may be said that the Governor-General will retain this overriding power to safeguard the legitimate interests of minorities.

While we shall welcome any Parliamentary legislation for the interim period, this is really a matter for His Majesty's Government to consider as how best to give effect to the transfer of power. What we are more interested in is the immediate transfer by convention so that the present situation might be dealt with adequately and adjustments made immediately to fit in with the future.

In the draft proposals for the transfer of power it should be remembered, first of all, that these are for the interim period only and do not, in any way, take away from the announcement of 20th February, 1947. The future set up will necessarily be determined by the authorities functioning in India or by the Constituent Assembly. The principal thing we are aiming at now is not only to create suitable conditions in India which will fit in with the interim period, but also to create a psychological atmosphere of friendship between India and England which will enable us to decide in a cooperative manner about our future relations.

Reference is made in these proposals to the transfer of power being on the basis of the Government of India Act 1935. It is inevitable that we should proceed on the basis of the existing structure subject to changes necessitated by the transfer of power. But the Government of India Act is a very complicated structure and some provisions of it

15. The proposals, consisting of six clauses, envisaged the possibility of power being transferred, on a Dominion Status basis, either to one Central Government, or to two sovereign States, in case of a partition. They provided for the transfer of power to take place on the basis of the Government of India Act, 1935, with suitable modifications. They also provided for a common Governor-General, a division of the armed forces between the two States and a convention whereby the Interim Government, pending the passing of the necessary Parliamentary legislation, would be "treated as a Dominion Government subject to the Governor-General exercising his overriding powers to safeguard the legitimate interests of the minorities." For the full text see *The Transfer of Power*, Vol 10, pp 861-862

may later come in our way. It is to be clearly understood that power to change this Act during this interim period will vest with the authority in India. Naturally we will not desire to make changes for a brief period but the power should be there in case of need.

I do not know what Parliamentary legislation might be passed by H.M.G. Without knowing its provisions fully it is obvious that we cannot commit ourselves to it as none of us are parties to it.

I accept generally the draft proposals for the transfer of power subject to the clarification given above. In Paragraph 5 I should like to add at the end "or till other arrangements are made."<sup>16</sup> This is merely to guard against the prolongation of the period contemplated in the paragraph.

We agree to the proposal that during this interim period the Governor-General should be common to both the States, if there are to be two States. For our part we shall be happy if you could continue in this office and help us with your advice and experience.

There is one important matter which so far has not been discussed, but which cannot be ignored. There should be some clause in our agreement to the effect that neither the Union nor the parts of India outside the Union forming a separate State, shall be entitled to permit bases, extra-territorial rights, or other infringements of the sovereignty of their territories by any outside State or power. Some such agreement must be made between the two States in India for their mutual protection.

We have discussed various schemes and proposals which involve a partition of India. With great regret and in considerable agony of spirit we have agreed to these proposals because we earnestly desire a peaceful settlement of our problems and the least compulsion on any group or area. As you know we have stood for a united India and we have worked for it for the greater part of our lives. The partition proposed is not of our seeking. Our part in this proposed partition is only this that if there is to be a partition according to the will of the people, there should also logically be a partition of certain provinces. We have further agreed to certain territorial adjustments because H.M.G. has apparently decided to hand over power only to a divided India. Because of our anxiety to have power handed over and because of our belief that the present situation urgently demands this, we are prepared to

16 Paragraph 5 recommended the establishment of a Council, consisting of the Governor-General and the two Defence Ministers, to supervise the separation and redistribution of the "mixed units" of the armed forces. The last sentence of this paragraph read "This Council will cease to exist as soon as its work is completed."

agree to the proposals made on behalf of H M.G. But we would greatly prefer to stand for a united India as well as to continue to abide fully by the Cabinet Statement of 16th May. If there is no real settlement on the basis of the proposals now made and no handing over of power in accordance with them, then inevitably we stand for a united India and the Cabinet Statement of 16th May

May I say how grateful I am for all the trouble you have taken in this matter. It is largely because of your personality and our faith in your sincere goodwill for India, that we have proceeded so far. I earnestly trust that we shall see some light soon and put an end to the horrors that are disfiguring India.

I have consulted Sardar Patel and this letter generally represents his views also.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### **39. Record of Mountbatten's Interview with Nehru and Patel<sup>1</sup>**

The Viceroy asked Pandit Nehru whether Congress accepted the December 6th statement. Pandit Nehru categorically assured the Viceroy that Congress had accepted the statement. The Viceroy said that his request was with reference to a telegram which he had received from Lord Ismay.

Then the Viceroy took Pandit Nehru through the paragraphs of the Announcement. He accepted the changes proposed With reference to Paragraph 13 of the Announcement, Pandit Nehru did not press his point concerning the Hindu areas in Sind. The Viceroy mentioned in this connection that Mr. Jinnah had demanded the portion of Purnea District should go to Bengal Questions of this kind should be referred to the Boundary Commission if there is a demand for amalgamation with one area or the other.

<sup>1</sup> New Delhi, 17 May 1947 Extracts *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 10, pp 870-871 This record was dictated by V P Menon who was also present at this meeting

The Viceroy then showed Pandit Nehru the latest amendment to the proposals for transfer of power.<sup>2</sup> There was considerable discussion on this question. The important aspect which Pandit Nehru stressed very vehemently was that, once the Announcement was made, the Interim Government should be treated by convention as a Dominion Government.<sup>3</sup> The Viceroy said that he saw considerable difficulty in acceding to this request, but he was prepared, on his own part, to give the Government as much freedom as they wanted in the day-to-day administration. Pandit Nehru said that if the Interim Government was to be treated as a Dominion Government, it would have a great psychological effect. He was prepared to give the Governor-General overriding powers both in respect of the protection of minorities and also on any matter affecting the separation of the Pakistan area. When these two principles were conceded, Pandit Nehru saw no reason why the Interim Government should not be treated by convention as a Dominion Government. He said the present state of affairs was intolerable and he would be ready to resign if his request was not conceded. The Viceroy put forward two suggestions to meet Congress's point of view. One was that there should be Muslim League Members working in the Congress Departments and *vice versa*. This was not acceptable to both Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel. The second alternative was that, immediately after 2nd June, the Muslim League should be asked to form a separate Government of their own, which would administer the Pakistan areas, and common matters should be discussed by both wings of Government.

The Viceroy promised to put forward Pandit Nehru's point of view to H.M.G., and he further promised to devise some means by which Congress would be given a free hand so far as administration of Hindustan was concerned.

2 The amended proposals for the transfer of power on the basis of two independent states stated: "the Executive of each State should take over power in responsibility to its Constituent Assembly on a Dominion Status basis". If the States desired there would be one common Constitutional Governor-General for the two States. When the Dominion Constitution came into operation the armed forces should be divided between the two States. In the second alternative proposals it was said, among other things, that there "will be a separate Governor-General for each State". For the text of the proposals A and B see *The Transfer of Power*, Vol 10, pp 888-889, and for Nehru's comments on them see *post*, item 43.

3 There was no mention of this in the above proposals

**40. To Abdul Ghaffar Khan<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
17 May 1947

My dear Badshah Khan,

You must know that the Congress Working Committee is meeting on the 31st May. On the 2nd June the Viceroy is going to see some of us and communicate the terms of a new announcement by the British Government. This will then be considered by the Working Committee I hope you will make a special point of coming to this meeting on the 31st and be prepared to stay here at least four days or so. We shall have to consider very vital matters affecting the future of the country. To take these decisions is a heavy burden for any one of us and we have, therefore, to take counsel with each other and share the burden. Your presence and Khan Sahib's is particularly necessary because only you two can advise us about the Frontier.

Gandhiji will be coming here for these meetings He will probably come some days earlier. It is possible that he may first go to Mussoorie for a few days and then come here. I am myself going to Mussoorie for four days on the 20th May.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

1 J N Collection.

**41. To V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
17 May 1947

My dear Krishna,

I heard of your rather static adventures at the Palam aerodrome today. I hope the rest of the journey is going to be less eventful.

1. V K Krishna Menon Papers, NMML

2. We had another two hours with Mountbatten today.<sup>2</sup> So far as the draft statement is concerned, various changes were incorporated which I had suggested. In regard to one or two other matters, he said that he would put them up before H.M G. He has still to face a tussle with Jinnah this evening and possibly he might see us again after dinner tonight. I do not know what the final outcome will be.

3. Regarding the proposals for the transfer of power, I found an entirely new draft different in many ways from the one we saw this morning. It was a little briefer. The main point of difference was the entire exclusion of the last paragraph which dealt with the Interim Government being treated as a Dominion Government by convention subject to the Viceroy retaining his overriding power to safeguard the interests of minorities. It was obvious that this had been deleted at Jinnah's instance. We took strong exception to this and in fact had a somewhat heated argument. Mountbatten, almost for the first time, took up an entirely contrary view and said that he thought we were unreasonable in insisting on this even to the point of breaking when it was only a question of two or three months. Both Vallabhbhai Patel and I pointed out that this had been a vital matter ever since we came into the Interim Government. Indeed we had come in on this very basis and I would never have formed the Government except on that basis. Soon after the Muslim League Members came in, this issue became a vital one and had ultimately led to our threatening resignation or in the alternative the removal of the Muslim League Members. This again led to our being summoned to London early in December. Again in January this issue became critical and because we made it clear that we could not continue, other developments took place which led to H.M G.s statement of February 20th and the change in the Viceroyalty.

4. So this particular issue has dominated the situation during the past nine months and it must be solved. In the new context, when there might be partition within a few months and a transfer of power, it is still more absurd for the present set-up of the Interim Government to continue. We were not objecting to the individuals in it, but rather to their lack of cooperation with each other.

5. I even told Mountbatten that if this matter was not settled satisfactorily, it might be difficult for us to continue in Government. This business of giving in to Jinnah when everybody else thought otherwise was an intolerable imposition.

<sup>2</sup> See *ante*, item 39

6. Mountbatten, to my surprise, opposed us completely and said that the world would consider us completely wrong in our insistence on this issue. It would mean that we wanted to crush the League during these coming two or three months and possibly to interfere with their particular areas to their disadvantage

7. I pointed out that this was completely wrong as we did not wish to interfere with those areas and we were prepared to allow the Viceroy to safeguard the interests of those areas as well as of minorities in general during this period All we wanted was a free hand for the rest of India.

8. So the argument went on and Mountbatten made some rather fantastic proposals about each Department of Government having some kind of under-study belonging to the other group who could serve as a check on any wrong action. Another proposal was that there might be separate Ministers for the separated areas.

9. Ultimately we did not press for the inclusion of a specific paragraph about the Interim Government functioning by convention as a Dominion Government because he said that would mean a complete break at this stage. But we told him that this matter must be explicitly and firmly put to H.M.G. because we did not want any misapprehension about it There was likely to be trouble later if it was not settled now. Mountbatten said he would do so and further that so far as he was concerned he would see to it that we functioned more or less as a Dominion Government. By that presumably he meant that he would not interfere himself. But that was not the point at all. Anyhow he said he would think about it and he asked the wise man V.P Menon to cogitate also.

10. This afternoon, before I saw Mountbatten, I sent him a letter more or less covering the various points that had arisen.<sup>3</sup> I enclose a copy of that letter.

11. V.P. Menon is coming to see me tonight to tell me of the latest developments in regard to the Qaid-i-Azam There is a possibility of our being sent for by the Viceroy also tonight.

12. I am thinking of going to Mussoorie on Tuesday morning the 20th, returning probably on Saturday the 24th or Sunday the 25th My return

<sup>3</sup> See ante, item 38

will depend on Gandhiji's arrival here. I have asked him to come to Mussoorie for a few days.

13. My address in Mussoorie will probably be "Cosy Nook", telephone number 40. I shall, of course, be in touch with Delhi and any messages sent here will reach me soon after.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

**42. To R.V. Brockman<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
18 May 1947

Dear Mr. Brockman,<sup>2</sup>

I have just received your letter of the 18th May.<sup>3</sup> I have no objection whatever to the paragraphs in my letter of the 17th May, to which you refer, being sent to Mr. Jinnah.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Lord Mountbatten Papers, Broadlands Archives Trust, Broadlands, Romsey, Hampshire

2 Vice-Admiral Sir Ronald Brockman (b 1909); Secretary to Admiral of the Fleet Lord Mountbatten in all appointments, 1943-59, Private Secretary to Governor-General of India, 1947-48, Principal Staff Officer to the Chief of Defence Staff, British Ministry of Defence, 1959-65.

3 Brockman had sought Nehru's concurrence to send to Jinnah paragraphs 13 to 19 of his letter of 17 May 1947 to Mountbatten See *ante*, item 38

**43. To R.V. Brockman<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
19 May 1947

Dear Mr. Brockman,

I have received your letter of the 19th May enclosing two draft proposals for the transfer of power during the interim period marked "A" and

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 10, pp 892-893.

"B".<sup>2</sup> So far as I can make out, "A" is identical with the draft given to me on the evening of the 17th May with the exception of the deletion of paragraph 4. This draft was in supersession of a previous draft given to me that day which was different in many particulars.<sup>3</sup> The first clause of the original draft referred to the possibility of there being one Central Government in India. The last clause (6) referred to the adjustment of India's position to that of a Dominion by convention pending the passing of necessary legislation by Parliament. In the course of our talks with the Viceroy in the afternoon of May 17th we pointed out the necessity of retaining both these clauses which had been omitted in the subsequent draft. Ultimately it was decided that clause 1<sup>4</sup> should be included; otherwise it would appear that there was no possibility of the people concerned deciding in favour of a United India. Whatever the chances of partition, it was improper to take it for granted that there will be a partition when people are asked to vote on the issue

2. As to clause 6 we pointed out that we attach the greatest importance to this. We did not press for it to be included in the draft if this was supposed to create fresh difficulties at the last moment. But we made it perfectly clear that this was very important and H M G should know our views in the matter. If some such action was not taken, very great difficulties would arise

3. In regard to the two drafts "A" and "B" that you have sent me, the main difference appears to be that in one there is a common constitutional Governor-General for the two States and in the other there is a separate Governor-General for each State. The other changes are consequential on this. We have already stated in my letter to Lord Mountbatten dated May 17th, paragraph 18,<sup>5</sup> that in our opinion the Governor-General should be common to both the States if there are to be two

2. Brockman had sent two alternative proposals on the basis of two independent States, and wanted Nehru to confirm that either in their present form was acceptable to him. For the two proposals see *The Transfer of Power*, Vol 10, pp 888-889

3 The previous draft containing six clauses is printed in *The Transfer of Power*, Vol 10, at pp 861-862

4 Clause 1 read "In the event of a decision being taken in accordance with the procedure laid down in H M G's announcement that there should be two independent States in India instead of one, the Executive of each State should take over power in responsibility to its Constituent Assembly on a Dominion Status basis. The Government of India Act, 1935 may be suitably amended for the purpose"

5 See *ante*, item 38

States. Further, I added that we should be happy if Lord Mountbatten could continue in this office for the interim period.

4. We prefer, therefore, draft "A" to "B". But if, for any reason, one of the States wants to have a separate Governor-General for this period, we have no insuperable objection to it.

5. May I draw your attention to what I have said in my letter to the Viceroy dated May 17th in regard to the proposals for transfer of power during the interim period? Also I should like to make it clear that all these proposals do not affect in any way H M G.'s announcement of February 20th 1947.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 44. To Ashrafuddin Ahmad Chowdhry<sup>1</sup>

Mussoorie  
23 May 1947

My dear Mr. Ashrafuddin Ahmad Chowdhry,<sup>2</sup>  
I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter of April 30th.<sup>3</sup> I can hardly discuss the vital questions you refer to at length in a letter. I do not think we have given up any fundamental principle for which we stood. But it is true that the events that have taken place during the last nine months have made us think realistically of the problems before us. It is no good talking in terms of slogans when decisions have to be made.

The Congress has stood for the Union of India and still stands for it. But we have previously stated that we are not going to compel any part against its will. If that unfortunately leads to a division, then we accept it. But inevitably such a division must mean a division also of Bengal and Punjab. That is the only way to have a united India soon after. If we can have a united India straight away without such division, that will, of course, be very welcome.

1 J N Papers, N M M.L

2 A senior Congressman of Bengal

3 Chowdhry wanted to know the fundamental basis and the fullest implications of the resolution regarding the division of the Punjab and wondered what would keep the Congress Muslims aloof from the League if the demand for Pakistan had been conceded by the Congress. He charged the Congress High Command with appeasing the League at every stage and not giving any direction to counteract its "barbarous activities" since August 1946.

I do not quite understand what you mean by saying that I should direct the members of our organisation to face all eventualities in a courageous manner.<sup>4</sup> Indeed I have tried to do so to the best of my ability. I might inform you that I do not spend very much time with day-to-day files. I am much more concerned with the present and the future of the country.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

<sup>4</sup> Chowdhry had written, "May I appeal to you with all the earnestness that I can command to gird up your loins and organise the Congress in a befitting manner to meet courageously the unsocial menace of the League "

#### 45. Jinnah's Fantastic Claims<sup>1</sup>

I regret I cannot enter into public controversy with Mr. Jinnah at this stage when vital matters are under consideration and final decisions are going to be taken. Mr. Jinnah's recent statement is completely unrealistic and indicates that he desires no settlement of any kind.<sup>2</sup>

The demand for a corridor is fantastic and absurd. We stand for a Union of India with the right to particular areas to opt out. We envisage no compulsion on others and will tolerate no compulsion. If there is no proper settlement on this basis without further claims being advanced, then we shall proceed with making and implementing the constitution for the Union of India.

Question: In view of the fact that Mr. Jinnah says that Pakistan would be sovereign, what would be the Congress attitude to Pakistan making agreements with foreign Powers without reference to Hindustan and what, for example, could Hindustan do if Pakistan gave extra-territorial rights to some outside Power?

<sup>1</sup> Interview to the United Press of America, Mussoorie, 24 May 1947. *The Statesman*, 25 May 1947

<sup>2</sup> In an interview with Reuters on 21 May 1947 Jinnah said "Firstly, the Muslim League will demand a corridor through Hindustan to connect the two groups of Pakistan provinces in North-Western and North-Eastern India. Secondly, the League will 'fight every inch' against the partition of Bengal and the Punjab."

Jawaharlal Nehru. In no event can we agree to any part of India having foreign bases or extra-territorial rights

The first essential today is to put an end to all violence in accordance with the Gandhi-Jinnah appeal

#### 46. To Akbar Hydari<sup>1</sup>

Mussoorie  
24 May 1947

My dear Hydari,

I have just received your letter of the 18th May. I came up to Mussoorie four days ago to see my daughter Indira and for a brief respite. I am going down again tomorrow to Delhi. I expect the next few weeks will be pretty heavy. So I hasten to send you a brief reply from here before I get tied up again with other work

2. I am not sufficiently conversant with the question of immigration into Assam to be able to say anything worthwhile. It seems to me, however, that the Assam problem is intimately tied up with the all-India problem. It was just possible for the Assam problem to be settled separately when Bardoloi and Saadullah<sup>2</sup> came to some kind of agreement.<sup>3</sup> That agreement having fallen through, I doubt very much if anything else can be done in the near future, except to hold off very serious developments.

3. As a matter of fact everything has been held up because of the political situation. This situation is bound to develop rapidly, for good or ill, during the next few weeks. That development will affect every part of India including Assam.

1 J N Papers, N M M L

2 Syed Mohammed Saadullah (1885-1955), member of the Muslim League, five times Prime Minister of Assam between 1937 and 1946

3 A coalition ministry headed by Saadullah and supported by the Congress was formed in Assam in March 1945 with an agreement to effect a planned settlement on the residual wastelands of the Bir Hoss natives and the pre-1938 immigrants and the eviction of all trespassers. But the coalition broke down in July 1945 when the Muslim League sought to confer land settlement rights on those immigrants who had already sown at least one crop, irrespective of their dates of arrival in the Brahmaputra valley

4. We have arrived at a stage when it is quite impossible to carry on in the way we have so far done. There must be a settlement, and if there is no settlement there must be some other way of ending this crisis Jinnah's attitude, as ever, has been completely unhelpful Even when he agrees to things in private, he dissents from the agreement in public He will not commit himself to anything and wants other people to do so leaving him free to act as he chooses. We are up against something which is neither political nor economic nor reasonable nor logical. Fortunately we have arrived at a stage when we must put an end to this sorry business some way or other. What has been happening in Lahore recently has been pretty bad. It is always possible that this might spread There is in fact no responsibility at the present moment anywhere And so long as responsibility is not fixed on a strong authority, these problems will go on

5. I certainly hope that the decision to post a brigade in Assam will not be reversed If I can help you in any way in regard to this matter, I shall certainly do so We must be prepared for all eventualities.

With all good wishes to you and Lady Hydari.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 47. To Eric Mieville<sup>1</sup>

Dehra Dun  
25 May 1947

My dear Sir Eric,

Sardar Baldev Singh has sent me a copy of his letter to you dated May 21st. I have already discussed some of the matters referred to in this letter with the Viceroy and you. In regard to paragraph 7 of the draft announcement, you will remember that I found the original draft rather confusing.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently this was redrafted But part of the confusion remained. However, as I had no objection to the principle behind it, I took no further objection to it.

1. J N Collection

2 See ante, item 37 (6d)

Sardar Baldev Singh points out a certain ambiguity in the draft.<sup>3</sup> I think he is right in pointing this out. In view of the narrow and legalistic approach of some people, it is desirable that there should be no ambiguity or misapprehension as to what is meant. It may well be argued that paragraph 7 somehow over-rides paragraph 6.<sup>4</sup> I think it is highly desirable that this ambiguity should be removed.<sup>5</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

- 3 Baldev Singh felt that paragraph 7 of the revised draft announcement implied that on the demand even from a single member of the Punjab Legislature the entire Legislative Assembly would meet and decide whether Punjab would remain united and which Constituent Assembly the province would join as a whole. This amounted to giving a veto to the Muslim majority in the Legislature. In his reply of 21 May 1947, Mieville admitted the ambiguity but claimed that paragraph 6 provided a safeguard whereby "the Members of the two parties of the Legislative Assembly sitting separately are to vote on whether or not the province should be partitioned. If a simple majority of either party votes for partition, then division will take place."
- 4 Baldev Singh felt that the Muslim majority in the Punjab Legislature, in pursuance of the provision in paragraph 7, "may refuse to sit in any partitioned house as provided for in paragraph 6"
- 5 On 26 May 1947, Mieville informed Nehru that the contents of Baldev Singh's letter had been telegraphed to Mountbatten in London, who had replied that "the paragraph in question is being redrafted so as to remove any possible misapprehension as to what is meant"

#### 48. To Baldev Singh<sup>1</sup>

Dehra Dun  
25 May 1947

My dear Baldev Singh,

Thank you for your letter of May 22nd which I received in Mussoorie. I agree with you about the ambiguity of paragraph 7 and I have written to Sir Eric Mieville also about it supporting your request for clarification.

I have written to him also about recent statements made by Jinnah which make it clear that he rejects the very basis of the proposals put

1 J N Collection

forward. We have made it abundantly clear to the Viceroy that we are not going to have a one-sided agreement about anything which commits us and does not commit Jinnah in any way

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 49. To Eric Mieville<sup>1</sup>

Dehra Dun  
25 May 1947

My dear Sir Eric,

Thank you for your letter of the 22nd May sending me copies of Mr. Jinnah's two notes to the Viceroy dated 19th May and 21st May.<sup>2</sup> I received these last evening at Mussoorie I am on my way back to Delhi where I hope to reach tomorrow morning. I am anxious, however, to convey to you my reactions to Mr. Jinnah's notes. I do not know what is happening in London except from the conflicting and unauthorised accounts appearing in the newspapers.<sup>3</sup> It is clear, however, that Mr. Jinnah's notes and the attitude he has taken up in them make a vital difference to the talks we have had so far with the Viceroy

1 J N. Collection Parts of this letter are printed in *The Transfer of Power, 1942-7*, Vol 10, pp 990-991

2 In his notes, Jinnah recalled an arrangement with Mountbatten whereby he was supposed to give his comments on the draft proposals for the transfer of power, which were sent to him by Mieville, only after seeing Nehru's comments on them. In his first note, Jinnah complained that he was not shown the full text of Nehru's letter of 17 May 1947 to Mountbatten and that the extracts he was shown did not deal with the proposals (marked "A" and "B") on which he was required to comment. In the second note, written after he was shown the full texts of Nehru's letters of 17 May and 19 May to Mountbatten and Brockman respectively, he criticised various arguments of Nehru and declined to give his comments on the ground that Nehru's acceptance of the draft proposals was conditional.

3 The political correspondent of the *Daily Mail* had reported that Attlee was considering a proposal to summon a conference of Indian leaders in London to make a last effort to avert partition. Another newspaper report speculated that Cripps and Listowel, the Secretary of State for India, might accompany Mountbatten back to Delhi to hold discussions with Indian leaders. Both these reports were officially denied.

2. So far as we were concerned we gave our views on the draft announcement as well as in regard to the proposals for the transfer of power, without any reference to what Mr Jinnah had said on the subject. Indeed we did not know except rather vaguely and informally what his reactions had been. We had been told that he had more or less agreed to the fundamental basis of the various proposals.

3 In effect we had accepted the revised draft announcement as well as the other proposals. But we had made it clear that there was no point in our accepting them unless they were the basis of a settlement and no further claims would be put forward. If the Muslim League did not accept the very structure of those proposals, then there can be no settlement on that basis and the proposals fell through. We were not prepared to have a one-sided acceptance of them.

4 I was not aware that Mr Jinnah was only prepared to give anything in writing after he had seen what we had said on the subject. Mr. Jinnah's note of the 19th May is chiefly an argument for being unable to say anything definite without seeing the full text of my letters addressed to the Viceroy. His note of the 22nd May is an argumentative criticism of various things said. I shall not go into any of these details as I think I have made our position quite clear in the course of my previous letters. It is clear, however, from what Mr. Jinnah says that he does not accept the very basis of the proposals with regard to the partition of Bengal and the Punjab.<sup>4</sup> In the course of a press interview he has gone much further and stated that he will resist any such partition. He has also added a demand for a corridor from the North-West to the North-East.

5 It is obvious that these demands and assertions are in complete negation of the basis of our talks with the Viceroy and the proposals and drafts that emerged therefrom. We are thus left exactly where we were when the talks started, or rather we have gone back because thus far there had been no authoritative mention of a corridor such as Mr. Jinnah has now stated. In view of the attitude taken up by Mr Jinnah, we cannot give a one-sided agreement to any proposal which does not lead to a full settlement. I have tried to make this perfectly clear in my

4 Referring to the revised draft announcement furnished to him on 20 May 1947, Jinnah said that "with regard to Bengal and Punjab no change has been made in spite of my very strong objections to partition of Bengal and Punjab embodied in my note of May 17th. I can only reiterate all that I have said in that with regard to partition of Bengal and Punjab and I adhere to views expressed therein."

previous letter and I wish to emphasise this again so that there might be no doubt in regard to it.

6 The consequence of Mr. Jinnah's rejection of the main proposals in the draft announcement is that we must necessarily fall back upon the Cabinet Mission's Scheme of May 16, 1946. We have adhered to this and have been functioning in accordance with this in the Constituent Assembly and otherwise. It is quite clear that there can be no partition of any part of India unless this is done on a logical basis taking into consideration the views of the people concerned in particular areas. We all know the passionate objection in Western Bengal and Eastern Punjab to being excluded from the Union of India. The only alternatives, therefore, are: the inclusion of the whole of Bengal and the Punjab in the Union or the exclusion of Western Punjab and Eastern Bengal from the Union. Since the latter is objected to by Mr. Jinnah, only the former course remains to be followed in accordance with the Cabinet Mission's Scheme.

7. Mr. Jinnah's notes are confused and lack clarity, except for the fact that he seems to object to most things. In regard to one matter, however, that is our desire that the Interim Government should be immediately treated by convention as a Dominion Government subject to the Viceroy's overriding authority in regard to the protection of minority interests, Mr. Jinnah has expressed strong disagreement.<sup>5</sup> This has nothing to do with the draft announcement. But, as we have stated previously, it is a vital matter for us. The present position has given rise to an enormous amount of trouble. I do not see how it can possibly be carried on in future even for a brief period, more especially when other changes are envisaged. We attach the greatest importance to this and I really do not see why Mr. Jinnah or the Muslim League should object to it when their particular interests are safeguarded and kept under the Viceroy.

8. Mr. Jinnah also objects to my saying that H.M.G.'s announcement of 20th February 1947 should not be affected in any way by any other

<sup>5</sup> Jinnah, in his note of 19 May 1947, said, "Whereas in the draft proposals, not only there is no mention about the Interim Government, but on the other hand it was assumed right through that it must be dissolved" In his note of 21 May, he said, "The Muslim League will never agree to any change in the position, functions, or powers of present Interim Government either by convention or otherwise but that it must be dissolved as soon as two Constituent Assemblies are formed."

proposals or the implementation thereof.<sup>6</sup> Surely it is nobody's contention that this announcement of H.M.G. should be scrapped. What the future relationship of England and India should be, is a matter for our joint consideration later on. That will depend to a large extent on what happens during the next few months and the reaction in the public mind to it.

9. Mr. Jinnah further says that he is unable to understand what is meant by my stating that any Act of the British Parliament conferring Dominion Status on India during the interim period may be varied by the authority in India.<sup>7</sup> I thought that Dominion Status necessarily carried this right; otherwise it is not Dominion Status.

10. During the past few years it has been our repeated experience that Mr. Jinnah does not commit himself to anything and does not like coming to a settlement. He accepts what he gets and goes on asking for more. We have arrived at a stage when this kind of thing will do good to nobody, and we are not prepared to have one-sided commitments in future. While these talks for a settlement are going on, the Muslim League has been carrying on aggressive "Direct Action" movements involving violence of the worst type. Mr. Jinnah, in spite of the appeal for peace made by him, has countenanced and encouraged these movements. This is not the way to a settlement and we are not prepared to agree to anything or to commit ourselves in any way unless this campaign of violence ceases and a settlement is arrived at.

11. I am anxious that there should be no misunderstanding about our attitude in the Viceroy's mind or in the mind of H.M.G. I would, therefore, request you to inform the Viceroy and H.M.G. immediately of our strong feelings on this subject and our reaction to Mr. Jinnah's notes.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. Jinnah inferred from paragraph 5 of Nehru's letter of 19 May 1947 to Brockman that the draft proposals "will cease to operate after June 1948 and that they are meant only for this interim period." He felt that the central point of Nehru's two letters under consideration was a case for the Interim Government to function as a Dominion Government by convention.
7. Jinnah wished to know which was the authority in India referred to by Nehru in paragraph 15 of his letter to Mountbatten of 17 May 1947.

## 50. The Desire of Congress for a Final Settlement<sup>1</sup>

Norman Cliff : What will be your response to a final appeal by the British Government and the Viceroy to all Indian parties to give the Cabinet Mission plan a trial?

Jawaharlal Nehru : Congress has not only accepted the plan fully, but has acted up to it. So also have all the other groups with the single exception of the Muslim League. Congress still wishes to adhere to the plan, but is prepared to vary it somewhat if there can be a full settlement on that basis. If there can be no settlement there is no particular point in varying the plan.

NC : Do you approve of the variations of the plan suggested as a possible alternative by the Viceroy?

JN : It would not be proper for me to express an opinion on the Viceroy's proposals, but the variation of the Cabinet Mission plan envisaged is the right opportunity to particular areas to opt out of a Union of India if they so desire, provided no area is forcibly taken out against its will. This inevitably involves partition of the Punjab and Bengal. Afterwards those parts which opt out in this manner can deal directly with the Union of India in regard to future relations and common subjects.

But all this can be done only on the basis of a full settlement with no further claims left over to be agitated for and above all after a cessation of violence and direct action movements. If there is no settlement then we continue with the Cabinet Mission's plan.

NC : Division of the Punjab and of Bengal being a condition of Congress concurrence in any proposals involving partition, will the Congress still concur if the present movements for unity within these two provinces succeed on the basis of their independence or any other basis?

JN : The independence of Bengal really means in present circumstances the dominance of the Muslim League in Bengal. It means practically the whole of Bengal going into the Pakistan area, although those interested may not say so

1. Interview to Norman Cliff, the correspondent of the *News Chronicle*, Mussoorie, 25 May 1947 *News Chronicle* (London), 27 May 1947.

We can agree to Bengal remaining united only if it remains in the Union. As a matter of fact, there is an overwhelming feeling in Western Bengal and in Eastern Punjab to separate from Eastern Bengal and Western Punjab respectively.

NC : Would you regard a referendum based on the present limited franchise as a fair method of testing the wishes of the masses in those areas on this issue?

JN : Their opinion may be tested by a referendum, but any kind of test would be a general test applied to other places as well. The present franchise is roughly 20 per cent of the possible electorate.

There is no doubt that on this issue, whether the tests were made under the franchise as at present or under a wider franchise, the verdict would be for partition of those areas if the whole provinces do not go into the Union.

NC : Are you hopeful of persuading Mahatma Gandhi, who has expressed opposition to any division of India, to acquiesce in any proposal that involves partition?

JN : Gandhiji has held the opinion strongly that any arrangement for a division of India or of provinces should not take place through British agency. If the people of the areas concerned desire a division there will be nothing to stop them.

NC : May we assume that Gandhi would naturally accept the popular verdict?

JN : A few years ago he actually suggested to Mr. Jinnah a scheme for the people to be consulted on such an issue.<sup>2</sup> His main point is that anything of the kind should be done by mutual consent, and not by imposition by the British Government. Mutual consent involves a settlement; imposition involves carrying on the dispute.

I entirely agree with Gandhiji's approach to this problem, and I think there will be no final settlement until the people of India are left entirely to their own resources and have themselves to shoulder this responsibility.

2. Mahatma Gandhi unsuccessfully negotiated with Jinnah in September 1944 on the basis of Rajagopalchandri's formula, which provided for a plebiscite in the contiguous Muslim majority districts in the northwest and east of India to decide the issue of separation from India.

NC . In the event of partition, is there a possibility of Hindustan choosing to remain associated with the British Commonwealth, at least for a limited period?

JN : There is no doubt that the Union of India is going to be a republic as the Constituent Assembly has declared. At the same time there is a strong desire among many people in India to have very close relations with the British Commonwealth. What form these relations will take it is difficult to say now.

Obviously a very great deal will depend on what happens during the next few months, or the next year, and the reactions to what happens in the public mind.

NC : Would any attempt by the British Government to secure bases or other privileges of that kind in any part of India adversely affect the prospect of future relations?

JN : Obviously if there is any special treatment of any part of India by the British Government this will react adversely on relations with the rest. If any portion of India ultimately does not form part of the Union there should be an agreement between it and the Union not to allow any outside Power to have bases or extra-territorial rights

NC : Assuming that any division of India would involve a division of forces, do you envisage the formation of a Joint Defence Council?

JN . The immediate issue in India is to have a firm authority and a centre which can act with one mind so as to stop the violence that is going on If any division takes place it will be fatal to weaken the central authority for the area which it controls

If in case of division the army also has to be divided it cannot be controlled by some kind of dyarchical system which would make it useless at a time of emergency such as the present.

Congress is willing to accept much that it dislikes if agreement and peace in India can be achieved thereby.

I am of opinion that even if division becomes inevitable it will not be of a long duration, and if an agreement can be secured the danger of civil disorder will be removed. I dismiss Mr. Jinnah's demand for a corridor connecting the Eastern and Western zones of Pakistan as fantastic and absurd.

## 51. Mievile's Record of Talk with Nehru<sup>1</sup>

Your telegram No. 6859 of May 27th, paragraph 2.<sup>2</sup> In the course of a talk I had with Nehru last night, I asked him how he viewed the discussions now going on about an independent Bengal.<sup>3</sup> He reacted strongly and said there was no chance of the Hindus there agreeing to put themselves under permanent Muslim domination which was what the proposed agreement really amounted to. He did not, however, rule out the possibility of the whole of Bengal joining up with Hindustan.

1. New Delhi, 27 May 1947. Mievile's telegram to Abell, 28 May 1947. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 10, p. 1013.
2. In this paragraph Abell had stated that the text of the draft announcement was still subject to alteration in the event of an agreement about Bengal. He also gave the latest draft of the additional section on Dominion Status.
3. H S Suhrawardy met Jinnah on 27 May 1947 in an effort to enlist his support for the movement for a united, independent Bengal. A constitution for such a sovereign Bengal had been drawn up with the assistance of Sarat Chandra Bose.

## 52. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
31 May 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

I hope you are not too tired after your strenuous labours in London and your journey. Perhaps the short change to the pleasanter climate of England in May was agreeable.

2. You will remember that I wrote to you on the 13th May about the President of the Congress representing the Congress formally at the conference of the 2nd June. You replied to me on the 17th May stating

<sup>1</sup> *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 11, pp. 11-12

that you appreciated my point but felt that it would be better to see him separately on the same day.<sup>2</sup>

3. We had a meeting of our Working Committee this afternoon and the very first point that was raised there by a member was about the invitations to your conference. Was the Congress represented in any way, I was asked, or were only the Members of the Interim Government represented? If the latter was the case, in what capacity was Mr. Jinnah invited? Such questions were raised. I told them that I had written to you in the matter and gave them the purport of your reply. They were far from satisfied and felt that the exclusion of the Congress President meant that Mr. Jinnah disapproved of him or his presence. It is a small matter whether anyone of us goes to your formal conference or not as we shall in any event discuss the subject at issue amongst ourselves and possibly later with you. But a certain formal procedure has to be adopted on formal occasions and the exclusion of the Congress President will be felt as a slight on the Congress by a large number of persons. It will be his business to give the lead to the Working Committee and to steer any proposals that are made through the Committee. The fact, if it is a fact, that Mr. Jinnah objects to his presence surely cannot be allowed to govern the normal procedure. We have frequently had to vary this procedure because of Mr. Jinnah's likes and dislikes and this has given rise to a great deal of resentment among our people. You will remember how Mr. Jinnah objected to Mr. Kripalani's signature<sup>3</sup> being attached to the joint statement issued by Gandhiji and Mr. Jinnah.<sup>4</sup>

4. I have been asked by the Congress Working Committee to write to you and request you to reconsider this matter in the light of what I have said above. As it is your desire to keep the meeting as small as

2. Mountbatten in his reply of 17 May to Nehru had stated that while he recognised Kripalani's importance he could not agree to have him at the meeting itself, but he would be ready to see him privately either just before or just after the meeting.

3 On 10 April Jinnah had said to Merville that he did not think Kripalani's name would carry any weight with the masses and in fact the only name that would do so in addition to himself was Mahatma Gandhi's.

4. The joint statement issued on 15 April 1947 deplored the "recent" acts of lawlessness and violence and called upon all the communities of India "not only to refrain from all acts of violence and disorder, but also to avoid both in speech and writing" any words which might be construed as an incitement to such acts.

practicable, I would suggest that I might be left out of this meeting and that I might see you separately on that day. There will be nothing unusual about this as I often see you separately. In the alternative we have no objection to any additional person being invited. Both Sardar Patel and I would feel embarrassed if we have to go to this conference without Mr. Kripalani.

5. The matters at issue, as you realise more than anyone else, are of grave import and it will be unfortunate if anything is done to prejudice a fair examination on the merits. I do not know what the final shape of the proposals is, but some of the proposals made previously run counter to the outlook which the Congress has had for a large number of years, and it will not be a simple matter for the Committee to change this outlook. It may be necessary to convene a meeting of the full All India Congress Committee to consider these important proposals.

6. I hope, therefore, that you will be able to invite the Congress President, Mr. Kripalani, to your conference of June 2nd.<sup>5</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. At the Working Committee meeting held on 31 May, Nehru stated that he was informed by the Viceroy that he had intended to invite the Congress President separately. It was decided that Nehru would again draw the attention of the Viceroy to the necessity of Kripalani attending the meeting.

### 53. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
31 May 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

Mr. Abell has written to me asking me to send proposals for obtaining a representative for Baluchistan. I have no particular proposal to put forward at this stage. I was under the impression that the first thing to be done was to ascertain the wishes of the people of Baluchistan regarding the position of that province in the future set-up of India. This too becomes necessary in the event of certain changes taking place in regard to the Punjab and Bengal.

<sup>1</sup> *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 11, p. 19.

2. You suggested to me in Simla, I think, that possibly a way of ascertaining the wishes of the inhabitants would be to send a Commission to meet the full jirgas of the various tribes and to report on their reactions to the proposals made. I am inclined to think that some such procedure might be feasible and desirable. A Commission might be appointed consisting of suitably chosen senior judicial officers and possibly representatives of the External Affairs Department. This Commission should arrange for full meetings of the jirgas and attend them explaining the points at issue. They may or may not take votes. They should really find out the general sense of each meeting and report accordingly. If necessary the Commission should split up into smaller sections to meet some of the jirgas.

3. The point is that they should consult as large a number of people as possible and not confine themselves to the selected few of the Shahi jirga.

4. As regards the people of Quetta Municipality, it should be possible to take a referendum of them or at any rate of the voters in the Municipality.

5. The Commission should submit a consolidated report giving their views of what the people of Baluchistan desire in the matter. They should also suggest the best means of representation in the Constituent Assembly.

6. I discussed this matter today with Sir Geoffrey Prior, the A.G.G. in Baluchistan, and he seemed to think that the method of appointing a Commission to ascertain views would be feasible.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru



## THE FRAMING OF THE CONSTITUTION



**1. To Rajendra Prasad<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi

20th February 1947

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I enclose a letter from Bapu.<sup>2</sup> I am afraid the Manipuris are too small a group to be given representation in the Advisory Committee; but one of their number might well be coopted when the sub-committee of the Advisory Committee goes to Assam.

I enclose also a telegram about Gurkhas.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal

1. Constituent Assembly of India, Committee Section, File No CA 27/Com/47, Ministry of Law, Government of India
- 2 Mahatma Gandhi wrote on 13 February: "Some Manipuris came to me yesterday. They claimed minority rights etc. I have dissuaded them. They, as far as I could understand, would be satisfied, if one of them could be on the Advisory Committee for the consideration of minority rights. If it is feasible, I think it would be right and proper to put one of them on the Committee."

**2. To Abdul Samad Khan<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi

27th March 1947

My dear Khan Sahib,<sup>2</sup>

I am informed that you visited the Agent to the Governor General in Baluchistan and told him of your proposed tour. As we informed you, we shall try to give you such facilities for your tour as we can and instructions have been sent accordingly. I do not know what the present position is in various parts of the tribal areas there. I would suggest to you to go to such areas as prove helpful and not at present to go to any

1 File No. 55-PS/46-PMS

2. Abdul Samad Khan was one of the two members from Baluchistan in the Constituent Assembly, nominated by the President

places which might be obviously inhospitable. I should not like you to go about with strong escorts. That would not be in the fitness of things and will take away from the informal character of your visit. It would be desirable to keep this visit as informal as possible.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 3. To Geoffrey Prior<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
27th March 1947

Dear Sir Geoffrey Prior,

A few days ago I saw your telegram, dated the 20th March, regarding the rumoured visit of the Tribal Areas Sub-Committee of the Constituent Assembly to Baluchistan. A reply was sent to you by telegram and a letter in reply also followed.

I have just seen your letter of the 20th March in which you refer to your interview with Abdul Samad Khan. The present position is that the Constituent Assembly has appointed an Advisory Committee in accordance with the Cabinet Mission's plan. This Committee has appointed a Sub-Committee for the North-Western tribal areas. The Sub-Committee has not been fully formed yet. Probably it will not be fully constituted for another month or so. There is thus no question of the Sub-Committee touring any area for some time to come. When and how they tour, it will be for them to consider, having in view the developments that have taken place by then.

Meanwhile, Abdul Samad Khan, a member of that Sub-Committee, expressed a wish to visit certain parts of the Baluchistan tribal area informally and to gather data. The Sub-Committee approved of his suggestion and this was thereupon communicated to our Department, so that we might give him such assistance as might be necessary. The Constituent Assembly, as you no doubt know, is a self-governing body and is in no way subordinate to our Department, or even to the Government of India as a whole, though many members are common and there is every desire to cooperate.

1 File No 55-SP/46-PMS

Abdul Samad Khan told us that he would fix up his tour programme in consultation with you. We promised him such facilities as could be given. This does not mean, of course, that he should necessarily visit places where he might be unwelcome and where there is a possibility of trouble. There should be no question of strong escorts accompanying him, though, normally, protection should be arranged where necessary. All these can easily be arranged in a friendly way by discussing the matter with him.

Your telegram of 20th March disturbed me. In this telegram you reported what a deputation of sardars, headed by Jogezaai Nawab, said to you. According to your report they used offensive language and practically threatened violence if some people they did not like visited them. It is not quite clear from your telegram what you told them. The attitude these sardars apparently took up before you was extraordinarily offensive and it should have been made clear to them that, while we welcomed an expression of their views, we could not tolerate any threats. They should remember that they cannot use terms of abuse in official communications and it is highly objectionable for them to talk to us in the way they have done. We want to proceed in this matter with the cooperation of as large a number of people as possible, but if that co-operation is denied and instead abuse takes its place, the work undertaken cannot stop. The Constituent Assembly is a body which will decide for itself as to what it is going to do and the attitude taken up by deputation of sardars is not likely to help their cause in the least. If the Jogezaai Nawab does not choose to attend the Constituent Assembly the fault is his.

From your telegram it would appear that you fear all the consequences that the sardars have threatened. We have to avoid trouble, but it is not the avoidance of trouble but an invitation to it to give in to threats. Our attitude must be clearly defined and the people concerned informed of it.

The tension in Baluchistan is partly the result of all-India tension and happenings in the rest of the country. That is a much larger problem which obviously cannot be dealt with by our Department or by you. It is for us to keep the peace and to cooperate in so far as we can with the activities of the Constituent Assembly.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**4. To H.V.R. Iengar<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
12th April 1947

Dear Iengar,<sup>2</sup>

I have seen copies of letters of Abdul Samad Khan and the press note issued by the Publicity Department of Baluchistan. I am writing on the subject to the Agent to the Governor General for Baluchistan. This press note appears to me a most extraordinary and objectionable document.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Constituent Assembly of India, Committee Section, File No CA/35/Com/47 Ministry of Law, Government of India
2. H V.R. Iengar (1902-1978); ICS, Secretary, Home Department, Bombay 1943; Secretary, Ministry of Planning and Development, 1946; Secretary Constituent Assembly, 1946-48, Home Secretary, 1948, Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 1952; Chairman, State Bank of India, 1956, Governor, Reserve Bank of India, 1957-62.
3. The press note dated 21 March 1947 stated that some tribal leaders and chiefs held that to the majority community of Baluchistan the tour of the Sub-Committee of the Constituent Assembly was unacceptable and if they should tour the Baluchistan area a riot, which would badly affect the minority community, was certain. Abdul Samad Khan, member of the Advisory Committee of the Constituent Assembly, thought that the press note was "at least undue publicity of an unreasonable act of certain individual if not provocative propaganda."

**5. On Amendments Regarding Fundamental Rights<sup>1</sup>**

Sir, I confess I am a little confused. I do not know where we stand after all this welter of amendments which have been moved and not moved and withdrawn and not withdrawn. I do not know how other Members stand in this matter, but there is utter confusion in my mind

1. Debate in the Constituent Assembly, 30 April 1947 *Constituent Assembly Debates, Official Report*, Vol III, 28 April to 2 May 1947, pp. 465-466

as to what is being discussed. As far as I can make out, the present position is this. The clause<sup>2</sup> stands with the first three provisos omitted and with certain other minor changes. In regard to (e) the proviso remains with this difference that the word "reasonable" is sought to be removed, and certain other changes have also been sought to be made. So much has been said which has no reference to the clause. I do not know if I am correct in understanding the position as that I am supporting the clause, that is to say, without those three earlier provisos, with the last proviso to clause (e) being retained and with the removal of the word "reasonable" from the proviso

It seems to me that there is also confusion in regard to another matter. Honourable Members seem to forget that we are dealing with fundamental rights. We are not legislating at the moment in regard to any matter. Various things have been brought to our notice—very desirable things which should be done or should not be done, but they having nothing to do with fundamental rights in a constitution, we can consider them separately; we can lay them down even as a part of the Constitution, if you like—or much better, a law could be framed accordingly. There is this confusion, this overlapping, and hence I think a great deal of difficulty has been brought into the picture. A fundamental right should be looked upon, not from the point of view of any particular difficulty of the moment, but as something that you want to make permanent in the Constitution. The other matter should be looked upon—however important it might be—not from this permanent and fundamental point of view, but from the more temporary point of view.

Now, Mr. Jaipal Singh moved an amendment which I gather he did not press.<sup>3</sup> As far as I am concerned, I entirely agree with him, but I do not see what it has to do with fundamental rights. I completely agree that the tribal areas and the tribal people should be protected in every

2 Clause 8 of the interim report on fundamental rights provided for (a) freedom of speech and expression, (b) right to assemble peaceably and without arms, (c) right to form associations or unions, (d) right to move freely throughout the Union, and (e) right to reside and settle in any part of the Union, to acquire property and to follow any occupation, trade, business or profession. The first three provisos sought to regulate and control the rights mentioned in (a), (b) and (c). The proviso to (e) stated that "provision may be made by law to impose such reasonable restrictions as may be necessary in the public interest including the protection of minority groups and tribes."

3 Jaipal Singh said that in the absence of the report of the Tribal and Excluded Areas Committee it would be unwise to proceed with this clause, as tribal and backward people required definite assurances and legal protection from being dispossessed

possible way, and the existing laws—I do not know what those laws are, but certainly the existing laws should continue and, may be, should be added to when the time comes. But thinking of this in terms of a fundamental right would be, I submit, entirely wrong. Mr. Nichols Roy<sup>4</sup> called upon me not once but several times to speak here and make clear my position apparently in some other capacity than I possess here. He referred to the Interim Government and to the External Affairs Department. Well, Sir, I need not remind the House that I am not here as a Member of the Interim Government or as a Member in charge of the External Affairs Department. I am here as representing the people of the United Provinces. But forgetting my representative capacity, I should like to say—and I am quite sure the House will agree with me, and, indeed, the House, in accepting the first Objectives Resolution,<sup>5</sup> made this point clear even then—that every care should be taken in protecting the tribal areas, those unfortunate brethren of ours who are backward through no fault of theirs, through the fault of social customs, and may be, ourselves or our forefathers or others; that it is our intention and it is our fixed desire to help them as much as possible; in as efficient a way as possible to protect them from possibly their rapacious neighbours occasionally and to make them advance. I can assure Mr. Nichols Roy that in so far as I have any say in this matter in my Government or otherwise, I shall try to do that. I think, however, that it is not a question of my desire or someone else's desire. I think it is bound to be the policy of any Government of India because that is likely to be an accepted principle of Indian politics today and I do not think any Government even if it was not keen on this issue would very well go against it. So I submit, Sir, that people interested in tribal areas should rest assured completely because, if any person ceases to be vigilant in the defence of any right or freedom, that freedom or right is likely to be swept away. So I want them to be vigilant, but, nevertheless, I want them to feel sure that they have the sympathy of the whole of India with them.

4. James Joy Mohan Nichols Roy (1884-1959); Christian missionary; Minister, Assam Government, 1927-29, 1937-38, 1946-50, 1952-56; Member, Constituent Assembly, 1946-50, Member, Advisory Committee for Minorities, and the Sub-Committee of Partially Excluded and Excluded Tribal Areas of Assam.

5. See *Selected Works*, (Second Series), Vol. 1, pp 240-250.

**6. To Rajendra Prasad<sup>1</sup>**

Simla  
8.5.47

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Maulana spoke to me again yesterday about your adding some Muslim names to the Minorities Committee I think this might be done now. There is no question of the Muslim League coming into the Constituent Assembly. Perhaps the best course would be to add 2 names now leaving some vacancies to be filled in later, that is, in two or three weeks' time. We have waited long enough and if we wait much longer there will be no point in adding any names.

Maulana has, I understand, sent you already some names for this purpose.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal

<sup>1</sup> Constituent Assembly of India, Committee Section, File No CA/10/Com/47, Ministry of Law, Government of India.

**7. To S. Radhakrishnan<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
14 May 1947

My dear Radhakrishnan,

Thank you for your letter. I am sorry Laski cannot come here this year.<sup>2</sup> I do hope he will be able to come sometime next year.

We are at present living in the midst of crises and the situation is volcanic. The only comfort one can derive from it is that some solution must come soon. We have to face very hard realities now and the time for vague resolutions is passed. Definite choices have to be made and the choice is often a very difficult one.

1. File No 16(3)(a)PS/47-PMS

2 Harold Laski had been invited by Radhakrishnan to come to Benares Hindu University as a visiting professor for five months.

According to our present programme the Constituent Assembly should meet at the beginning of July for two or three weeks. The final session of the Assembly should be held in September. We want to finish that work at the latest by October. If, however, the rapid development of events makes it necessary, we are prepared to finish our work even in August. Much will depend on what happens in the first fortnight of June.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 8. To B.R. Ambedkar<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
May 22 1947

My dear Dr. Ambedkar,

Thank you for your letter of the 14th May and for your book on *States and Minorities*<sup>2</sup> which you have been good enough to send me. I shall read your book of course. For the present I have referred to the parts you mention on pages 14-16 and 30-35

I might say at the outset that I agree with your general approach to this problem, more especially in regard to industries and insurance.<sup>3</sup> About agriculture also I agree,<sup>4</sup> but I am not sure that it is easily possible for us to take the step you suggest immediately. You must have seen

1 J N Papers, NMML

2 *States and Minorities* (Bombay, 1947) was in fact a memorandum submitted by B. R. Ambedkar to the Advisory Committee of the Constituent Assembly in March 1947 in which he had outlined his plan for the future constitution of India

3 As remedies against economic exploitation, Ambedkar suggested that key and basic industries should be owned and managed by the State and that insurance should be nationalised. He also suggested that the State should acquire subsisting rights in agricultural land by compensating the owners, tenants and mortgagees, and organise collective cultivation by letting out farms to tenants

4 Ambedkar had suggested among other things that agriculture should be State industry, there should be no landlord, no tenant and no landless labourer, and the farm should be cultivated as a collective farm

the proposals of the National Planning Committee in regard to industries and agriculture.<sup>5</sup> I have no doubt that agriculture will have to be carried, on a large scale, on cooperative or collective basis in the future, though I rather doubt if we can rule out completely relatively small-scale private holdings. In any event, such a major change in agriculture can only be brought about either by fairly general consent of the parties concerned (and in this I do not include the big landlord), or else by some kind of dictatorial compulsion. I am opposed to the latter and, in any event, I do not think it is feasible I doubt greatly if we can get this general consent from the peasantry till the matter is sufficiently made clear to them and till they see for themselves cooperatives and may be collectives in action Any premature attempt might lead to failure on a wide scale which we might be totally incapable of facing.

In theory there is nothing to prevent our introducing such clauses in a constitution, though they are not in line with the old idea of fundamental rights You are perfectly right in saying that the old conception must be widened and must include economic democracy. In a sense we have aimed at this, though rather vaguely, in the Objectives Resolution of the Constituent Assembly. Nevertheless, I doubt the propriety of laying down the precise economic structure we are aiming at in the constitution we are drawing up, and more especially in the Fundamental Rights.<sup>6</sup> After all this is a practical matter for us to consider as to how we can achieve our objective as rapidly as possible.

We are faced today in India with all manner of disruptive tendencies and forces. We have at the same time a strong urge for unity which is combating these forces of disruption. I have little doubt that the conception of unity will ultimately win through. I am not merely referring to certain parts of India being cut off from the rest, but much more to other forces of a disruptive nature We are going to have a difficult time. Obviously the first essential for us to aim at is to establish a stable and strong administration which can combat the disruptive tendencies and at the same time push ahead the progressive forces in the country. If we tackle, at this stage, very fundamental economic issues, in the

5. The National Planning Committee had proposed in 1940 that all key industries should be controlled by the State, the question of State ownership of others (apart from defence industries) was left for future consideration for lack of adequate data It also suggested derecognition of intermediaries, collectivised cultivation on wastelands and lands owned by government, and cooperative farming in which private ownership would be permitted

6. Ambedkar argued that state socialism and parliamentary democracy could be established, and the possibility of dictatorship eliminated, if the fundamental rights provided for protection against economic exploitation

process of constitution-making, we might add to the strength of the disruptive tendencies and achieve nothing at all. Time is an essential factor and we dare not complicate the issues too much at this stage. We have got to go ahead with our constitution and finish it within the next few months.

I am sure you will appreciate the difficulties of the situation and realise that the quickest method of achieving what you and I desire will be first to gain stability in the political field and then tackle immediately the other vital questions that you have suggested. To reverse the process might mean neither stability nor a solution of this question.

I have no doubt that the coming of independence to India will release powerful forces aiming at rapid economic changes. That is as it should be. I have no fear that in the future reactionary tendencies, which undoubtedly exist in India, will triumph over the progressive forces. But I do fear that if we do not step warily these reactionary tendencies might well produce confusion in India and even some kind of dictatorship. We have the example of the growth of the Nazi party in Germany, which taking advantage of popular slogans really built up a reactionary regime.

I would suggest to you, therefore, that it would not be desirable to press for the changes in the constitution which you have suggested.<sup>7</sup> It might be worthwhile, however, to appoint a separate committee on economic planning, but this should not be related to the constitution and should not delay constitution-making.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. Ambedkar complained that his scheme was not allowed to be discussed in the Advisory Committee as well as the Fundamental Rights Sub-Committee. He wished to know whether Nehru would support his move for the appointment of a separate committee on economic planning.

THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AND  
THE STATES



## 1. Minutes of the Meeting of the States Committee<sup>1</sup>

x

x

x

x

Before the actual proposals<sup>2</sup> submitted by the Dewan of Baroda were discussed, the Chairman (Jawaharlal Nehru) asked for the views of B.L Mitter<sup>3</sup> on the following points:—

1. What is his answer to the claim which the States Negotiating Committee are making that they are the sole authority with whom the Constituent Assembly may negotiate and that it is inadmissible for the Assembly to enter into discussions with individual States or people's organisations<sup>4</sup>?
2. Is the scope of the discussions between the States Committee of the Constituent Assembly and the Negotiating Committee or individual States to be confined only to the question of the manner by which the 93 representatives shall be sent to the Assembly or should the scope be wider as claimed by the States Negotiating Committee?
3. The States Negotiating Committee are understood to be taking the view that before the States can make up their mind as to whether they will enter the Constituent Assembly, they must be given assurances on the various points mentioned in the resolution adopted by the conference of Rulers<sup>4</sup>. What is the view of Baroda on this point?

1 Held on 7 February 1947. *The Framing of India's Constitution (Select Documents)*, (Nasik, 1966), Vol I, pp 638-641. The meeting was attended by Nehru, Azad, Patel, Sitaramayya, Shankerrao Deo, Gopalaswamy Ayyangar and B L Mitter, the Dewan of Baroda. Here, as in all proceedings of assemblies and committees, only Nehru's speeches are given in full, the rest of the relevant proceedings have been summarized.

2 The Gaekwar of Baroda had disputed the claim of the States Negotiating Committee that it represented all the Princely States. He was in favour of holding direct negotiations with the Constituent Assembly with a view to joining it.

3 Brojendra Lal Mitter (1875-1950); Advocate-General of Bengal, 1925-28; Law Member, Government of India, 1928-34 Member, Bengal Executive Council, 1934-37, Advocate-General of India, 1937-45, Dewan of Baroda, 1945-47; acting Governor of West Bengal, 1947.

4 A resolution was adopted at a meeting of the Princes setting out their terms for cooperation in framing an agreed constitution for the proposed Union of India on 29 January 1947.

4. What is the view of Baroda on the resolution on objectives adopted by the Constituent Assembly?

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Nehru referred at this stage<sup>5</sup> to the press conference held by the Cabinet Mission on 17 May 1946 at which the Mission had said that the formation of the Negotiating Committee was a matter for discussion with the States.

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The Chairman stated that it was not possible to come to a final settlement this morning in view of the discussions to be held with the States Negotiating Committee tomorrow and he suggested that the Committee might have a further meeting with Sir B.L. Mitter after the discussion with the States Negotiating Committee.

5. Mitter submitted that the Constituent Assembly was clearly competent to discuss the question of representation with States which did not choose to have their views put forward through the Negotiating Committee

## 2. Negotiations with the Princes<sup>1</sup>

Jawaharlal Nehru: May I, on behalf of myself and on behalf of my colleagues, welcome you, Sir, and the other members of the States Negotiating Committee to this Joint Committee to which we have looked forward for so long. I am sure that, whatever differences there may be between us with regard to other matters, we are actuated by the sole desire to find a way as rapidly as possible for the freedom and independence of India. If we are actuated by that desire, I am sure everything else becomes secondary and we can proceed to our work and come to

1 Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the States Committee of the Constituent Assembly and the States Negotiating Committee appointed by the Chamber of Princes held on 8 February 1947 at New Delhi. The meeting was presided over by the Nawab of Bhopal. *The Framing of India's Constitution (Select Documents)*, (Nasik, 1966), Vol I, pp. 644-673.

conclusions. I do not exactly know how we shall proceed with this work. This is a kind of round table conference, but although there is no specific agenda on the table, I think the questions for us to decide are how and in what manner the representatives of the States can enter and participate in the work of the Union Constituent Assembly. If I may venture to make a suggestion, it is this. It would be better if we considered the specific point before us rather than if we discussed more or less academic aspects of the various questions, because obviously in regard to academic, if I may so call them, aspects, there are differences of opinion and we may discuss them at length without really considering the actual issue before us. May I make the suggestion that we should concentrate on the specific issues before us, and in course of time we may discuss the other aspects, for I suppose we will meet not merely today but later and we will get nearer and nearer to one another. We shall thus succeed at any rate in getting over this preliminary hurdle.

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JN: We are a committee appointed by the Constituent Assembly and derive authority from the Resolution passed by the Assembly constituting this Committee. The Resolution authorises us to do certain matters and enter into certain discussions in determining the distribution of seats and the method by which the representatives of the States to the Assembly will be elected. That was passed on the basis of the Cabinet Mission's Statement of May 16th because the Constituent Assembly is trying to follow precisely the lines laid down by the Cabinet Mission's Statement. Now, I do not see how it is possible for us to commit—to go beyond that authority—the Constituent Assembly—to matters which have not been referred to us.<sup>2</sup> Sir C P. Ramaswami referred to the Cabinet Mission's Statement, paragraph 14, in which it says that the precise form which that cooperation will take must be a matter for negotiation during the building up of the new constitutional structure. Now, what is the process of the building up of the new constitutional structure? Surely, the Negotiating Committee cannot do the building

2. The Nawab of Bhopal had referred to the resolution passed by the Standing Committee of the Conference of Rules on 29 January 1947 which declared that the final decision in regard to the entry of States into the Union of India would rest with each State. The States would retain all subjects and powers other than those ceded by them to the Union. The constitution of the States, their territorial integrity, boundaries, dynastic successions, etc., would not be altered except with their consent and approval.

up. The building up process comes in when the representatives of the various parts of India meet in the Constituent Assembly. It is misleading to take things apart from their context, consider them and come to decisions which cannot be coordinated. It is not clear to me what purpose the subsequent meetings of the States representatives in the Constituent Assembly are going to serve if it is attempted to come to decisions on all major questions.<sup>3</sup>

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JN: Sir C P. Ramaswami will no doubt appreciate that speeches made in Parliament are not to be construed as a statute governing our procedure this way or that way.<sup>4</sup> The main thing is that we have to go by the Cabinet Mission's Statement. Either we are considering something which is included in that Statement or something which is not included in it. Obviously, it cannot be both. If it is included in it, we necessarily abide by it. There can be no dispute about it. If it is not included in it, it is either contrary to its spirit or something which is not contrary; if it is contrary, it should not be accepted. If it is something which is not necessarily contrary to it, it is worthy of consideration, but by whom and when? Surely by the representatives of British India and the Indian States meeting together and considering this point and arriving at some integrated solution as well as they can. Otherwise, of course, the process of constitution-making will take this shape; that different points are settled by different representatives of different groups separately and there will not be any integrated solution but independent conditions may be laid down. I will submit to you, Sir, and to all those present, that it is hardly possible to see a constitution if conditions are laid down subject to this and subject to that because then this difficulty in regard to integration arises. As I pointed out to begin with, so far as this Committee is concerned, we are specifically instructed to consider certain matters and have no authority to deal with any other matters.

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JN. Reference was made to the Resolutions of the Constituent Assembly and of the Standing Committee of the Rulers' Conference. There is

<sup>3</sup> Ramaswami Aiyar had suggested that, if there had been prior agreement as to the main "conceded points", the other questions would be part of the general framework.

<sup>4</sup> Ramaswami Aiyar had quoted Cripps' statement in Parliament that he was sure that the Committee would work out an acceptable basis of cooperation in the Constituent Assembly.

a vital difference between the two. If you follow up our Resolution, all that it binds us is to meet together and discuss whereas the Resolution of the Princes Chamber binds us as to what the future character of the Constitution should be. It is a big difference and therefore, except to ask you to come and to discuss, we don't ask you to commit yourselves We are asked to come and discuss these as well as other matters Now, when we talk about the conditions of entry into the Union, we do not know definitely what the nature of the Union will be, except in so far as the Cabinet Mission says. If you have accepted that, well and good. Now we are trying to do something which obviously we are unable to do, quite apart from the Resolution. We are trying here to lay down fundamentals of the Union, which as I said, in so far as the Cabinet Mission is concerned, we have accepted In so far as it goes beyond that, it is a matter for discussion. So we are discussing something of a vital nature which could only be decided not by you and not by us, but between you and us We have to discuss and arrive at results. As Sir Gopalaswamy Ayyangar pointed out, it is not a question of our asking for more powers from the Constituent Assembly<sup>5</sup> It is tantamount to asking the Constituent Assembly to give up its power or its right to decide fundamental matters I don't see how any Constituent Assembly can hand over such powers to a Sub-Committee.

Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar also referred to various negotiations that have taken place between the Viceroy and others in the month of May<sup>6</sup> You know that during last year and even before the Cabinet Statement came out, there were innumerable letters and interviews between various representatives of groups and parties All of them do not fit into each other. There are contradictions in them It is quite easy to point out contradictions, because there was always a tendency on the part of the Viceroy to say something which may please them to some extent The other parties did not know what was being stated and we do not know what you were told It is only when we meet together, we come back with different backgrounds When the Cabinet Mission Statement came out, in a sense, it was not in continuation, it was sometimes in supersession of what had happened What are we to do? Many proposals

<sup>5</sup> Gopalaswami Ayyangar had pointed out that as they were merely a Committee of the Constituent Assembly, they had no authority to decide questions of the kind referred to in the Rulers Conference Resolution of 29 January 1947

<sup>6</sup> Ramaswami Aiyar had referred to the discussions on the Negotiating Committee held in Simla in May 1946, when the Cabinet Mission had declared that the more important question for the Committee was to negotiate the conditions for entry into the Union

were made in Simla and Delhi and they were subsequently rejected. It does not help us very much as to what was said at that time or written by the Viceroy or by us.<sup>7</sup> We can act on the Cabinet Mission Statement where light was thrown upon it by the subsequent happenings. I have to act, apart from my agreeing or disagreeing on any matter. I have great difficulty in my mind as to how we can lay down certain important aspects of the Constitution or of the Union at this stage, as a committee. We simply cannot do it, and the Raja of Bilaspur told us that even at this stage we have to consider it informally. That can always happen. Individuals or representatives can meet together, come to some agreement and then that could be put forward before the full Assembly. It is an entirely different thing if some such agreement is reached out of the context of the Assembly and in a sense imposed upon them. Even if a good agreement is arrived at which probably is acceptable to the Constituent Assembly in the context of affairs, it is not going to be accepted, normally speaking, by the people, if the people feel that something is being imposed upon them. We have no right to go beyond that. My feeling is that the Committee is trying to impose something upon it. Two or three groups have different approaches. I submitted in my initial remarks that we might consider the practical steps that we may take. I submit the right thing is not to trouble ourselves with differences but to take specific things. I cannot say off-hand how far any group of the Constituent Assembly ultimately would be compelled to do this or that. We are all bound by certain compulsions which are compulsions of events, but otherwise how far they will bind us, I do not know. Things may happen which would compel us. The first stage is for representatives to come here and meet each other and try to find out a solution. If, unfortunately, solutions are not arrived at, I do not exactly know what will happen. It is for you and us to consider, and before making that attempt, we may not try to face the final difficulty right at the initial stage.

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JN: In the previous paragraph they have dealt with British India.<sup>8</sup> They have only dealt with the subjects for the Union and the other is

7. The Nawab of Bhopal had recalled his letter of 19 May 1946 to the Viceroy stating that the decision whether the States would join the Constituent Assembly or not would be taken by the Rulers Conference, and would depend on the result of the forthcoming negotiations

8. The Nawab of Bhopal had said that the Cabinet Mission had not dealt in detail with their problem as it was said in the State Paper that the "precise form which their cooperation will take must be a matter for negotiation during the building up of the new constitutional structure."

the method of representation of the provinces of British India. There is no other matter. They have not dealt with the States matter in detail.

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JN: You referred to certain conversations.<sup>9</sup> We had numerous conversations with Sir Stafford Cripps, Lord Pethick-Lawrence and the Viceroy and the whole of the Cabinet Mission and, in the conversations, quite naturally, the question of the States did crop up I do not remember a single instance where they said anything except this to me or to us: We are going to leave this matter entirely for decision between you and the States. Presumably they had in mind the political parties, because there was no Constituent Assembly at that time. Then the question was, if there was a kind of Assembly, how we should go there At no time was even a reference made to any Negotiating Committee at that time. This only came into existence after the State Paper came out. Before us all the time it was only a question of how we should go there, and, having gone there, meet the representatives and discuss matters Apart from all that, it is an odd position. I have not challenged the fact that you represent your States as Rulers. Your 93 representatives will come there. They may represent your viewpoint or some other viewpoint. We can say, at the most, we speak, let us say for the moment, on behalf of the present Constituent Assembly. We do not speak on behalf of the 93 people who may subsequently come in. You may speak partly for 93. But how can we commit the 210 people as they are now or the 93 others who may come in subsequently? They might say, "It is all right for you to do that But we want to consider the matter afresh". The point is this: You will be justified in saying that you do not wish to commit yourself in the sense that you enter the Constituent Assembly without any commitments, but at the same time, you wish to commit us when we have no authority to commit ourselves either now or in the future as to what the Constituent Assembly should do. As Sardar Patel said, the whole thing is essentially of a voluntary character—this Constituent Assembly. Supposing any of us, either as a group or as individuals, do not want to go in, we will not be forced to go there. Our whole object is that we should meet together and, in view of the developing circumstances, find a way out which is agreeable to the parties concerned If, unfortunately,

9. The Nawab of Bhopal had said that while the representatives of British India had detailed discussions with the Cabinet Mission, the Indian States had discussed only the general outline of the plan and were told that they could carry out further discussions with the representatives of British India through their Negotiating Committee.

that way out is not found, then events would move and the compulsion of events will force us to do something. We must try to force events by finding a way out and the manner in which to find a way out is for us to meet the representatives of the States and the rest of India and formally and informally discuss these matters.

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JN. Negotiations about what matters?<sup>10</sup> It is difficult to say what the Constituent Assembly may or may not do. I can tell you that we have got our limitations, what subjects we cannot touch, they being outside our purview. The units of the union would have a very great degree of autonomy. Now, the Union Constitution will deal with Union subjects and common matters concerned. So far as the other subjects are concerned, the provinces and the States will be sovereign. Naturally, in a constitution you cannot have hard and fast lines. All these are matters which normally would have to be considered as they arise. Now obviously, the question of monarchy is not the concern of the Constituent Assembly at all.

Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya wished to raise the question of linguistic provinces in the Constituent Assembly. We tried to discourage it as it is not a matter for the Constituent Assembly. It is a matter for settlement after the constitution is set up

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JN. Take these two matters, the question of monarchy and territorial integrity. These are left out of the Constitution.<sup>11</sup>

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JN Para 3 (of the Objectives Resolution) read .

Wherein the said territories, whether with their present boundaries or with such others as may be determined by the Constituent Assembly and thereafter according to the law of the Constitution, shall possess and retain the status of autonomous Units, together with

10 The Nawab of Bhopal had asked for satisfactory assurances on certain fundamental problems which arose as a result of the observations on monarchy and territorial integrity contained in the Objectives Resolution passed by the Constituent Assembly and asked Nehru how they could conduct the negotiations

11 The Maharaja of Patiala had said that the doubts and misgivings of the members of the States Negotiating Committee should be cleared up

residuary powers, and exercise all powers and functions of government and administration, save and except such powers and functions as are vested in or assigned to the Union, or as are inherent or implied in the Union or resulting therefrom;

Obviously, the units of the Union must have a certain area. The point is what a unit should be. In regard to the provinces, they are obvious units. In regard to some States, they are obvious units. In regard to others, grouping and adjustments will be necessary. The question comes up of what a unit is. It may be a group of States. It is not a question of changing the boundaries of States, but of constituting a unit. When the Union is formed, presumably, there will be less of units. And therefore it seems that the units will have to be indicated. The approach to that question will be by consent and cooperation.

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JN: Some territories are not in India at present. Even they can come in. The constitution has to provide for such contingencies.

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JN: About what?<sup>12</sup> A constitution will have to have clauses dealing with possibilities of changes Every constitution will have a provision for changing even the constitution itself. Nothing can be rigid about a constitution. It is always subject to changes. So, in regard to change of boundaries of units, there must be some provision in it.

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JN: Some time or other, we will have to consider it.<sup>13</sup>

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JN: Difficulty arises with regard to smaller States. Obviously they are not big enough to form units. How to proceed, I do not know. Various proposals have been made for consideration Persons most concerned must have a very large say in the matter. All these questions have nothing to do with change of boundaries. The whole thing is on a voluntary

12. The Nawab of Bhopal asked if a definite declaration could be made about the territories which were not in India

13. The Maharaja of Bilaspur had suggested that it would be appropriate to define a federal unit and indicate the schedule of units in the new Union

basis. This resolution took a long time in drafting. Procedure never arose during the whole course of the drafting. The constitution will have to provide for future adjustments as all constitutions provide.

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JN: How can we take this question?<sup>14</sup> Exactly how do you proceed about it? Take the provinces which can be federated. It is an intricate question to be considered by those concerned. I can say that the question does not arise at this stage. We have to consider it fully when we come to sections presumably by consent.

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JN: It may be for a State to say it is not coming into the Constituent Assembly. I can understand that. What a federating unit is, is a matter for the Constituent Assembly to decide

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JN: So far as the Constituent Assembly is concerned, it is obvious that the state of things as they are in India is the result of operation of forces and nobody can stop the forces simply by passing a resolution.<sup>15</sup> Are we discussing the Constituent Assembly or are we discussing the muzzling of forces in India?

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JN: I hold certain views about States. I have expressed them strongly and I propose to express them strongly in the future. I want you to have perfect freedom. I want to retain my perfect freedom. There should be no misunderstanding about it. I think the States are anachronisms in India as they are and I propose to say so in future. But I do not think my place in the Constituent Assembly is a place to say that and I do not propose to say that. I want to be straightforward and to function in the Constituent Assembly accepting the State Paper as it is. That has nothing to do with my future of India or of the world. I believe in a world order. I believe in all manner of things and I am going

14. The Nawab of Bhopal had insisted on some assurance in regard to boundaries

15. Ramaswami Aiyar had asked for a written assurance that the final decision in regard to the entry of the States into the Union would rest with the States

to speak about it. I think some States are forward, some are hopelessly backward. There are no civil liberties there. Am I precluded from saying so?

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JN: Absolutely.<sup>16</sup> We are discussing about the Constituent Assembly, what it should do and what it should not do. It is a voluntary structure. It is obvious as things are that any State or, for the matter of that, any province, if it chooses to walk out, really walks out, at any stage, in the beginning, middle or at the end. What happens afterwards has nothing to do with the Constituent Assembly. The States may come in or may not. We cannot compel them if they did not come in at any stage.

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JN: You may remember some months back, before the Constituent Assembly met, a suggestion was put forward that these matters may be discussed informally. In fact, the sole matter before us was how the States were to come in and it was suggested that we might meet informally. Unfortunately, that course was not followed. Since the Constituent Assembly met, the first thing that came up was that we should consider these matters informally. Unfortunately, we could not do that. The Constituent Assembly and this Committee have been waiting for the last so many weeks since it was formed, 6 weeks or two months, to discuss it informally or formally. It was not our fault. We were told that the States were not willing to discuss it. Now we are presented with a long resolution<sup>17</sup> which I may say is a very offensive resolution to every self-respecting individual and to the organisation, the Constituent Assembly. It is an exceedingly offensive resolution. Apart from the merits of it, the method of its presentation, without any reference, was not friendly. It was the method of putting a barrier which could not be crossed, of making a solution more difficult, quite apart from the things contained in the resolution. Actually, many of the points in doubt can be explained to the satisfaction of all. Normally all of us want to go together, but if things are put in such a way as to be a barrier, then it becomes very difficult even at the first stage.

I submit that of the two matters suggested, one about monarchy and territories, that does not arise at all. Then you have referred to the resolution passed, that it was passed *ex parte*. It is *ex parte* in the

16. Ramaswami Aiyar had stated that some political parties were totalitarian.

17. See *ante*, item 1, fn 4

sense it was passed without the representatives of the States being present. Under the constitutional scheme, the States representatives could not be present then. It is neither your fault nor our fault. But the whole object of that resolution would have been defeated if not passed at an early stage. We wanted to have some kind of blueprint of what we were looking for. We have to deal not only with individuals; we have to deal with vast masses of people in India. We have to deal with a situation in which, if I may say so, if we did not try our utmost, the whole of India would be a cauldron within six months. It would have been a cauldron within the last six months—and I don't know whether it will not be a cauldron in the next six months—due to the economic situation. It is not a matter of my agreeing with my colleague here or my colleague there; it is a question of vast forces being at work. We are trying to control them and direct them into particular channels. In the last six months owing to various factors, this situation might have boiled over. We want to come to peaceful arrangements whereby British rule may cease and we want to come together to evolve a constitution satisfactory to all—if not to all, because in a vast country like India it is difficult to satisfy everybody—at least a majority of our people and major parties. We hope to succeed and we will try our best. So we have passed this resolution. If I may put it to you, if we had not passed that resolution, then, apart from the merits of the resolution, the Constituent Assembly would have come up against an initial barrier in public opinion in India, and I know something about the mass opinion in India, which would have been very difficult to pacify. As it is, public opinion is far more advanced than the Constituent Assembly; it is a revolutionary type of opinion. It is always alive and functioning, whether it takes the shape of strikes, hartals or otherwise. But all the same it functions. So we have to put some ideal before them and we took the greatest care to put that both in terms of the Cabinet Mission Statement and also in such a way as not to alienate the rights of any community, State or province, and in the broadest shape imaginable. I don't think that we have come in the way of any single State right or provincial right or community right. Naturally, it is a broad resolution and it is a resolution which, we thought when we drafted it, and afterwards, cannot possibly be objected to by anybody except such persons as may object to the elimination of British rule from India, which, of course, is a most patent unpatriotic objection. It is possible that some phrases in it might give rise to some misapprehensions, but we can clear up such misapprehensions. That is not a difficult matter. After all, whom do we represent? Do we gain anything by it? I don't gain anything by it. I have no personal interest in it. Perhaps I represent an idea or a group, but on

that score I cannot tie down that group—whether it is the Congress or the Constituent Assembly. It is for them to decide. We talk of the Constituent Assembly being a self-governing body. It is so only in the sense that being constitutionally established nobody can interfere with its decision. Those who do not join it cannot be forced to join it. They cannot be forced to accept its decisions, but by compulsion of events they may eventually be forced to accept its decisions. I submit that this kind of approach of laying down various conditions precedent to entering the Constituent Assembly is not a helpful approach. It only creates difficulties and in fact very probably it creates an atmosphere against the very things that we want done and against the very things contained in this resolution. If it is thought to be imposed, then this vast public opinion will react against it. I try to control that public opinion to the extent I can, but I cannot control it more than that, nor do I wish to control it. You are putting me in a difficult position; you are putting our Committee in a difficult position and also the mass opinion which the Constituent Assembly represents, and we to some extent represent.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> It was decided that the next joint meeting would begin at 11 a.m. on 9 February 1947. Nehru was asked if any statement was to be made to the press and he replied "none of us should say anything about our talks here, to the outside."

### 3. Negotiations with the Princes<sup>1</sup>

Jawaharlal Nehru: The discussion that we had yesterday brings out certain things, clarifies certain points, and at the same time, it may be that those points were shrouded up in discussion of other things, and it is desirable that we should be clear as to exactly where we stand arising out of the discussion yesterday.

1. Minutes of the Second Joint Meeting of the States Committee and the States Negotiating Committee held on 9 February 1947 at New Delhi *The Framing of India's Constitution (Select Documents)*, (Nasik, 1966), Vol I, pp 673-689.

Obviously, we are proceeding, as we must, on the basis of the Cabinet Mission's Statement with the acceptance of it in full with all its implications. Unfortunately, that Statement is not an ideal Statement, it does not deal with every possible contingency, and quite naturally, because we are moving along in a changing, dynamic state of affairs and we cannot provide for every contingency. Nevertheless the first thing to be clear about is to proceed with the full acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's Statement. Apart from the legality of that Statement, one thing also seems to me obvious, namely, that the Scheme is essentially a voluntary one, where no compulsion, except, as I said, the compulsion of events, is indicated. No doubt, so far as we are concerned, we accept it as a voluntary Scheme where people may join as individuals, as groups, or Rulers or otherwise. We are not trying to force any to join if they do not want to. It is a matter for negotiation throughout. Apparently the idea is that the whole Constituent Assembly, consisting of all these various elements, negotiate *inter se* so far as they could do so. Those formal negotiations are preceded by other understandings between parties May I go further? Suppose at one stage of the Constituent Assembly, on a particular point agreement is not arrived at, we will have to come back to that point later, we cannot say it is closed, because we have these obvious factors. The situation is that before very long British power in India will fade away, it is fading away, and the more it fades away, the people of this country, whether in so-called British India or in the States, have to face that situation and face it by cooperating *inter se* by solving problems *inter se*; there will be no third party to intervene between them. So, whatever happens, we shall have to negotiate today, tomorrow, or the day after, at every stage sometimes. If we take longer to produce results, we not only postpone decisions, but create difficulties, but, anyhow, ultimately we have got to come together. That is an obvious fact.

May I say also that some of us here are members of the Congress, and though not formally, to some extent, may represent the Congress movement? But naturally, we cannot, since we are acting in this Committee, speak on behalf of the Congress for two reasons, one, because we must have the authority of the Congress, and secondly, we are functioning here as members of the Constituent Assembly which may have a very large element of the Congress in it, but, nevertheless, has other elements and we cannot commit other elements of the Constituent Assembly. More or less, we are representatives of the Constituent Assembly.

Now, to go back, apart from the acceptance of the Scheme which is basic, some points were raised yesterday. One was about the monar-

chical form of Government. That question has not arisen at all in the Constituent Assembly, nor, so far as we can see, does it arise at all from the Statement. But it has been repeatedly stated on our behalf in the Constituent Assembly as well as outside that we have no objection to it, we accept that, and we do not want to come in the way of the monarchical form of Government at all. This has been made perfectly clear.

Another point that was raised in our discussion yesterday was about some apprehension about territorial readjustments. I tried to point out that the resolution passed by the Constituent Assembly had no reference, in the minds of those who framed the resolution or who proposed it there, to any change regarding the States. It has no relation to the States. It was an indication that there will be provision made in the Constitution or in the process of regrouping units, etc. where some changes may have to be made. It had no reference to changing boundaries. I can conceive territorial boundaries being changed for economic reasons, for facilitating governmental purposes, etc., but any such territorial readjustments, we are quite clear, should be made with the consent of the parties concerned, and not be forced down. As I say, for the moment we are not thinking in terms of any such thing, but if this question arises it should be essential that the parties concerned should consent to it.

The Scheme, as has already been stated, is a voluntary one, and whether in regard to the entry to the Constituent Assembly or subsequently, when the Constituent Assembly decides and comes to conclusions, there will be no compulsion, and the States will have the right to have their say at any stage just as anybody else will have the right to have their say at any stage, so that the coercive factor must be eliminated from that.

In regard to some confusion which has possibly arisen about subjects and powers, we proceed on what the Cabinet Mission's Statement specifically says. The Cabinet Mission's Statement said, "The States will retain all subjects and powers other than those ceded to the Union." That is perfectly clear, we accept that Statement, we accept that entirely. Generally speaking, those are the matters that came up yesterday in the course of discussion, and perhaps we might proceed on that basis and consider other matters now.

Nawab of Bhopal: We consider the matters of the resolution

JN: I do not know what are the matters in the resolution If there were any misapprehensions, I trust we have cleared them, and we may

proceed with the business now, that is, as to how the States can enter into the Constituent Assembly, in what form, and what is the method to be adopted, as referred to in the Cabinet Mission's Statement

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Nawab of Bhopal: It is stated in the Cabinet Mission's plan that paramountcy will revert to the States.

JN: I do not personally understand where paramountcy comes in at all. There is a Union of autonomous units of equal status, each unit sharing the Union's paramountcy. The States will be on the same level as other units

Nawab of Bhopal. Paramountcy vanishes?

JN: Yes, there is no paramountcy anywhere. That question can only arise during the interim period. It is not going to arise in the Constituent Assembly.

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Nawab of Bhopal. The question of inherent powers is a thing which will have to be very carefully dealt with.<sup>2</sup>

JN: Undoubtedly. That is why we have appointed a Committee. I may mention one instance. In a Union there will be some kind of judicial authority to interpret the Constitution and so on. Such things have to be provided for. It is obviously a question of interpretation that may have to be considered.

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Nawab of Bhopal: The Constitution and the territorial integrity and succession in the States, I hope, shall not be interfered with by the Union

JN: It is not a question of interfering with the Constitution. I suppose certain fundamental rights are part of the Union structure. Presumably, they will apply to the whole of India. A certain guarantee of individual rights will be provided for in it. Today the Human Rights

2. The Nawab of Bhopal had earlier said that the States would continue to retain all powers except those delegated by them

Commission is meeting in New York Our representatives are there<sup>3</sup> The conception today is that there are common individual rights which should be guaranteed all the world over. Naturally I presume we shall accept any world charter to that effect.

Nawab of Bhopal: Fundamental rights are to be the rights of our people too, but it does not rest with the Centre to deal with these matters.

JN: That matter can go to the U.N.O. What is the U.N.O.? It is developing into a world republic in which all States, independent States, are represented and to which they may be answerable on occasions, for instance South Africa over the South African Indians' question, even though this was a domestic question because the Indians there are South African citizens. There is a reference to a Fundamental Rights Committee, section 20. Here again, we should like the States' representatives to join the Committee which has been formed which will not decide but which will report to the Constituent Assembly but which will presumably draw up certain fundamental rights more or less the same as the Human Rights Charter may determine

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JN: So far as fundamental rights are concerned, if any authority intervenes, it may not be the Union as such.<sup>4</sup> Possibly the Supreme Court might or might not. It is judicial rather than an executive procedure. It is a common Court for the whole of India, provinces and States, and States can play as much part in that Court as any other part of India.... The present tendency is to go beyond the Supreme Court to the International Court, whether it is the Court of Justice at The Hague or the U.N.O. to which we belong. It is a dynamic conception which is developing and many people think in terms of the International Court or Assembly exercising more and more powers to control national rivalries. I do not really know what will happen even to the International Court. Therefore the exact powers in regard to fundamental rights will

<sup>3</sup> Mrs Hansa Mehta and Lankha Sundaram were the Indian delegates to the Human Rights Commission which held its first session at Lake Success from 27 January to 10 February 1947 under the chairmanship of Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt.

<sup>4</sup> The Nawab of Bhopal had stated that authority could not be given to the Union to interfere in the internal situation in the States on the plea of fundamental rights.

have to be discussed by us carefully so that a common basis, a common agreement, may be arrived at. What that basis is is a matter for discussion....On the whole I agree with what Sir C.P. has stated.<sup>5</sup> These fundamental rights are of various types. Some will be in the nature of maxims. There is a tendency in regard to fundamental rights to state many noble aspirations which are not legally enforceable easily but we will try to live up to them. On the other hand, there are legally enforceable rights. In the course of discussion, we may decide the machinery, etc. Some will be legally enforceable in the unit itself, some other rights, might be, in the Union itself.

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JN: Our delegation to the Human Rights Committee last week sent in a long Declaration of Human Rights for discussion and, if I may just mention it, I was not anxious that it should be presented.<sup>6</sup> In fact, I cabled them to delay its presentation but they had already presented it. This proposal of theirs is being supported by the British delegates and by some other countries too. The matter is for discussion all over the world. One other matter I may mention. Questions come up regarding ex-Italian colonies in North Africa and we have to give an opinion on the rights of those people and also on what the future democratic rights of Japan should be. It has all got mixed up. It is very difficult to isolate one problem from the others.... We start first of all with the autonomy of the units.<sup>7</sup> Obviously, the Constituent Assembly or the sections or groups will draw up the provincial constitutions. There is no procedure indicated to draw up the State constitutions.... So far as the Constituent Assembly is concerned, our work there is of a voluntary character.<sup>8</sup> It is not a legal interpretation of the document but often enough of facts which bring pressure to bear upon each party and obviously when they are big factors such as the withdrawal of British power from India, the equilibrium is changed and we will have

5. Ramaswami Aiyar had stated that as soon as it was granted that the fundamental rights, which were of various types, were to be accepted voluntarily and the agency to enforce them was set up, there would not be any confusion.

6. Ramaswami Aiyar had mentioned that that aspect of fundamental rights was under discussion before the Human Rights Committee.

7. The Nawab of Bhopal had asserted that the Union Constitution alone would be settled according to the Cabinet Mission plan and would not deal with the internal administration of the States

8. The Nawab of Bhopal had said that the whole basis of the Cabinet Mission plan was voluntary negotiation

to find a new equilibrium. Many problems will arise and we will have to face them together.

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JN: You will remember—I am speaking subject to correction—that in the Cabinet Mission's Statement there is a reference to the Negotiating Committee of the States and that there is no reference in regard to a Negotiating Committee of the British India part of the Constituent Assembly. When this Scheme came up before the Constituent Assembly it was natural that we should state that we would confer with all parties interested.

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JN: The Cabinet Statement says that the Viceroy should forthwith request the States to set up a Negotiating Committee.<sup>9</sup> As to how it should be set up, who should set it up, the States or the Chamber of Princes, it does not say. Apparently the Viceroy wrote a letter to the Chancellor on the subject. The Chamber obviously represents a very large number of States, a great majority of them. There are some States who are not represented in it.... It is a fact, however, that your Committee represents a vast number of States, big and small, of India. Nevertheless it may be said that it is not representative of some. I am not going into that question. The formation of this Committee has apparently nothing to do with the Cabinet Mission's plan. It is something between the Viceroy and the Chamber of Princes. We recognise you, of course, for the principal reason that you can deliver the goods.<sup>10</sup> That is the main thing. You represent a large majority. You can talk effectively on their behalf. But there is nothing, legally speaking, to prevent us—in actual practice it is not possible for the Constituent Assembly to take up the position that we will not confer with representatives of other States or for the matter of that with the representatives of the States peoples, to know their viewpoint. They, as it happens, presumably cannot deliver the goods. That is a different matter. But we want their viewpoint also so that the essential voluntary character, the essential comprehensive character, of our work should not suffer

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<sup>9</sup> The Nawab of Bhopal had said that the authorised body under the Cabinet Mission plan was the States Negotiating Committee

<sup>10</sup> Ramaswami Aiyar had said that they were the representatives of those who mattered

JN: I must confess this is the first time I have heard about it.<sup>11</sup> We have never heard it before in any form. The mention of major communities, as you know very well, was due to special problems, minority and majority problems I don't see a parallel between the States.

Nawab of Bhopal. Our representatives are in a permanent minority in their number.

JN: Those interests are covered in regard to matters we have already discussed this morning They are not matters of one religion or group.

I can very well understand conflicts of interests, if you like, between maritime and non-maritime areas.<sup>12</sup> Similarly I can understand conflicts of interests as between two provinces

V.T. Krishnamachari Agricultural and industrial.

JN. All those problems are bound to arise but they do not arise between States and provinces.

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JN: Shall we consider the question of the 93 seats?

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JN: It will be best to appoint a small Committee and I don't think the Committee would take long over it because I understand that the Chamber Secretariat have got definite proposals and the Constituent Assembly Secretariat have also got certain proposals So it should not be difficult when we have those proposals.

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11 The Nawab of Bhopal had stated that they had not received the concession in regard to the States as provided in the Constituent Assembly whereby the major issues affecting one community or other could be decided only by the majority of that community

12. Ramaswami Aiyar had mentioned that the distribution of the Union Centre's powers might cause a conflict between the States as a whole and British India Further, there was bound to be a conflict of interests between maritime and non-maritime areas.

THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AND THE STATES

JN: That principle of 93, i.e., one for a million should be generally followed.<sup>13</sup> Obviously it cannot be 100% followed because of certain difficulties in grouping.

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Nawab of Bhopal. What sort of Committee are we intending?

JN: If you could nominate a few from your side and we could nominate a few from our side, 24 hours should be sufficient.

Nawab of Bhopal. I like the idea of a small committee who can produce a plan

JN. I appreciate that Would it not expedite, if the Committee does not finally decide but comes to certain conclusions which can be put up to the States? The mechanical part can anyhow be undertaken So far as the stage is concerned, that is for you to determine. I am not quite sure. The Cabinet Mission's plan is not very explicit about any intermediary stages and I don't see why you cannot come in at any earlier stage. But that is for you to determine

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JN: That is quite clear. We appreciate what you say<sup>14</sup> We personally wish the earliest association of the States in the Constituent Assembly because we feel that if the States' representatives are not there and some work is done, some difficulties may arise later. Practically speaking, there is nothing to prevent the States coming in at an earlier stage It might well be said that since the word 'reassemble' has been used, they must have assembled previously We would like the States to come

13. Ramaswami Aiyar had said that seats would be distributed on the basis of 93 seats for 93 millions

14 N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar had said that the provincial or sectional representatives and representatives of the States would reassemble as expressed in the Rulers' resolution The Nawab of Bhopal promised to join the Constituent Assembly, but only after consulting the Committee of Princes

in earlier. We would like you to join the Committee on Fundamental Rights also.<sup>15</sup>

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JN: These are purely legal matters<sup>16</sup> and it is very difficult for me to give a legal opinion as two eminent lawyers have given opinion in regard to this matter . You may remember that before the Constituent Assembly met, the matter was indirectly mentioned to me. I was told that the Political Adviser's opinion was that the States Negotiating Committee could only go there as a kind of observers and not as participants. I was told so. I said I do not know anything. I cannot say what the legal position is. It was for them to decide.

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JN: We leave it entirely there. We have not discussed the distribution and the general principle governing selection or we say we discussed it or we considered it.. Sir C P Ramaswami Aiyar mentioned that so far as Travancore is concerned, Travancore had six seats and that he is calling his Assembly to elect four and that two will be nominated.<sup>17</sup>

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JN: We then adjourn this meeting to a subsequent date in 10 or 15 days' time. I should like it to be as early as possible.

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K M. Panikkar: What about issuing a press communique now?

15 The Fundamental Rights Committee was one of the five sub-committees of the Advisory Committee set up on 24 January 1947. It consisted of twelve members, namely, J B Kripalani (chairman), M.R. Masani, K T. Shah, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar, K M Munshi, Harnam Singh, Abul Kalam Azad, B R Ambedkar, Jairamdas Daulatram, Hansa Mehta and K M. Panikkar. The last two members were nominated by the President.

16 Ramaswami Aiyar had suggested that the States in the preliminary stage should be represented by the States Negotiating Committee, which should have formed part of the Constituent Assembly.

17 Ramaswami Aiyar had stated that 10 or 15 States would get individual representation like 16 seats for Hyderabad, 7 for Mysore, 6 for Travancore, and 4 for Kashmir.

JN: Yes, if you like. Some kind of press communique has to be issued. The two Secretaries may sit together and draft one.

Maharaja of Patiala: But who will look through it?

JN: It will not take five minutes. Those who want to go can go, and those interested can sit for a few more minutes and look through the draft.<sup>18</sup>

18. The meeting then adjourned till 1 March 1947.

#### **4. Joint Statement on the Negotiations<sup>19</sup>**

The States Negotiating Committee set up by the Chamber of Princes and the Corresponding Committee of the Constituent Assembly held joint meetings yesterday and today. In the course of the discussions, reference was made to the Cabinet Delegation's Statement of the 16th May, the resolutions of the Constituent Assembly and the resolution passed by the Conference of Rulers. The discussions were friendly and satisfactory. On the basis of a general understanding arrived at, it was decided to take up the question of the representation of the States in the Constituent Assembly. The Secretariats of the Assembly and the Chamber of Princes were accordingly asked together to draw up detailed proposals for the allocation of the 93 seats allotted to the States and to place them for consideration before the next joint meeting of the two Committees which will consider the proposed allocation as well as the method of selection of the States' representatives.

The next joint meeting will be held on the 1st of March.

1. Issued by Nehru and the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes on 9 February 1947 *The Hindustan Times*, 10 February 1947; also printed in *The Framing of India's Constitution, (Select Documents)*, (Nasik, 1966), Vol. I, pp. 618-619.

## 5. On the Scheme for a Union of the Deccan States<sup>1</sup>

1 I welcome the idea of the Deccan States Rulers making a declaration embodying the various points contained in the draft.<sup>2</sup> I suggest that such a declaration should be a joint statement by the Princes and the representatives of the people. I further suggest that the declaration should, besides accepting the fundamental rights of the people, also lay down that full responsible government will be the basis of the constitution and that, during the interim period, interim governments will be introduced in the States.

2 The Constitution-making body should endorse the resolution on objectives passed by the All India Constituent Assembly.

3. The Constitution-making body should at the outset frame a resolution regarding its objectives laying down that the Union of Deccan States will form a unit in the Union of India.

4. There should be no time-limit, i.e., 10 years as given in the draft, for the revision of the constitution or for any change in the Union.

5. Procedure laid down for the election of Muslim and Harijan members to the Constitution-making body should be simplified.

6. Rulers or their nominees should also be associated with the Constitution-making body. They should not have an overwhelming influence in that body and they should also be brought in by the process of election.

1 New Delhi, 15 February 1947 A I S P.C Papers, File No 45 (Part I)/1946. p 55, N M M L It is quoted in Dwarkanath Kachru's letter of 19 February 1947 to Madhavrao Bagal, President of the Deccan States Regional Council. A deputation of the Council had met Nehru on 15 February and discussed with him the scheme for the Deccan States Union.

2 The main features of the ten points contained in the draft were that all power and authority were derived from the people, the constitution-making body would consist of 34 members who would be people's representatives only and would be elected by the elected members of the States legislatures or Praja Mandals or the Deccan States Regional Council, and that there would be a single union of the participating Deccan States but different linguistic areas would have the right to join neighbouring linguistic provinces as and when formed. See also *Selected Works* (Second Series), Vol I, pp 296-298.

**6. To the Maharaja of Cochin<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi

20 February 1947

My dear Maharaja Saheb,<sup>2</sup>

I have received your telegram<sup>3</sup> about the distribution of the 93 seats of the States for the Constituent Assembly. We appreciate what you say about the importance of Cochin because it is a maritime State and even more so because of the constitutional advance that has taken place there. Cochin has in many respects set an example to the other States and it would be fitting for this to be recognized. In the representation in the Constituent Assembly, however, we have to proceed very largely on the population basis and I do not know if it is possible for us to vary this to any appreciable extent. So far as we are concerned we would welcome any variation in favour of Cochin as suggested by you. But the matter is not entirely in our hands.

We shall gladly meet your Minister, Shri P. Govinda Menon,<sup>4</sup> and discuss the matter fully with him when he comes to Delhi.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 Constituent Assembly of India, Constitution Section, File No CA 34/Ser/47, Ministry of Law, Government of India

2 Kerala Varma (1870-1948), Maharaja of Cochin, 1946-48

3 In his telegram dated 18 February, the Maharaja of Cochin had urged that the Cochin State should be given two seats in the Constituent Assembly instead of one

4 Panampilli Govinda Menon (1908-1970), Food Minister, 1946, and Prime Minister, 1946-47, Cochin State, member, Constituent Assembly, April 1947, Education Minister, 1948-51, Finance Minister, 1952-54 and Chief Minister, 1955-56, Travancore-Cochin State, Minister for Food, 1966-67, for Law and Social Welfare, 1967-69 and for Railways, 1969-70, Government of India

**7. Negotiations with the Princes<sup>1</sup>**

Jawaharlal Nehru: On the last occasion we had a discussion for two

1 Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the States Committee and the States Negotiating Committee held at New Delhi on 1 March 1947. *The Framing of India's Constitution, (Select Documents)*, (Nasik, 1966), Vol. I, pp 689-704

days on many points and we dispersed leaving some matters to the respective Secretariats to consider and report on. They did that and, I believe, have presented an agreed report. Meanwhile other events<sup>2</sup> have taken place which introduce an additional element of urgency into all our proceedings and all our work. Now, anything that we can do in the Constituent Assembly or outside has to be done with the time factor in mind much more even than previously. So I hope that the result of our discussions on this occasion will lead to our functioning together as rapidly as possible with a view to achieving satisfactory results in the very near future.

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JN: The position is this: You are referring to the agreed report as the basis for the allocation of seats<sup>3</sup> I must first of all mention that some minor alterations may be necessary. Of course, we accept the report as a whole, i.e., the principle underlying the general allocation of seats. Then there are some minor alterations to be made, but that will not give rise to any difficulty. In fact they could be left over to the Secretariats to work out in consultation with others if necessary. But, in the main, I think that report was the agreed report and was based on the principle laid down in the Cabinet Paper of one to a million<sup>4</sup> About the reference of this matter to the General Conference of Rulers, that is a course entirely for you and your colleagues to decide. But, as I understood the matter last time, this interval was more or less for that purpose, for the purpose of giving you time to come with the necessary authority or additional authority in a technical matter of this kind, viz., the allocation of seats. In fact, when we adjourned at 1 o'clock on the last occasion, the respective Secretariats met at 3 and at 5 and they produced the agreed list. They worked rapidly with experience of similar work they had done previously and compared their lists. I was under the impression that there was time during this interval for the parties concerned to hold any

- 2 On 20 February 1947, Attlee announced the British Government's definite intention of taking necessary steps to effect peaceful transfer of power into responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948. He also announced that Lord Wavell would be replaced by Lord Mountbatten.
- 3 The Nawab of Bhopal had referred to the report of the States Committee regarding the method of elections to the Constituent Assembly and the allocation of seats
4. Paragraph 18 (a) of the Cabinet Mission Statement allotted seats in the Constituent Assembly to each province proportionate to its population, roughly in the ratio of one to a million

## THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AND THE STATES

consultation necessary and that at this meeting we could give final touches to the arrangement and leave minor variations to the Committee.

About any reference by us to the Constituent Assembly, there is no need at all. When the Constituent Assembly meets we have naturally to tell them what we have done, but that does not mean any reference to them or any modification of the arrangement by the Constituent Assembly which will meet presumably in the third week of April. Our conception of the Constituent Assembly is that when we meet them, all these preliminaries should have been finished so that we may be able to meet together there for the more important work that we have before us which indeed now, because of the recent statement of the British Prime Minister, has to be undertaken on a stricter time-table before us. I do not know, but the general opinion among the people seems to be that we should go by a time-table in the Constituent Assembly so that we might practically finish the work within six or seven months so far as the framing of the Constitution is concerned so that we might have some time to act in accordance with what has been drawn up. So it is unnecessary for us to wait to report to the Constituent Assembly as to what has been done. The position is this, the Constituent Assembly is meeting round about the third week of April. There are certain Committees of that Assembly, important Committees not only from our general point of view, but from the States point of view also. There is the Advisory Committee of which there are several Sub-Committees. There is the Fundamental Rights Committee with which the States are intimately concerned. They are not intimately concerned with the North Western Tribal Committee, the North Eastern Tribal Committee, or the Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas Committee....

Anyhow, the States are welcome to all the Committees. They are most concerned with the Fundamental Rights Committee of the Advisory Committee and we would very much like naturally to have the representatives of the States on that Committee as well as on other Committees, for example, the Union Powers Committee which has not so far met but which may meet in the near future. That again is a matter in which the States are obviously interested. These Committees will make provisional reports for the consideration of the Constituent Assembly itself later on, and if the States' viewpoint is fully represented there, it would be easier to get out an interrelated report of the various viewpoints. Although the Constituent Assembly is going to meet in the third or the fourth week of April, the process of the States sending their representatives to it, I presume, will take a little time. So, I should have thought that, apart from any formal ratification, the process should be started and completed as soon as it suits your convenience.

ence. Last time, when this matter was referred to the two Secretariats, the original proposal was that they should report within a day or two. In fact, they finished their work in two hours. Then it was suggested that they had better report later on so that time may be given for consulting the various bodies or some of the bodies represented in the States. I understand that that time was necessary so that we could finally dispose of these matters. The more helpful course would be for all these preliminaries to be settled subject, if necessary, to formal ratification.<sup>5</sup>...I quite understand that.<sup>6</sup> In fact, this question was brought up and referred to on the last occasion. Obviously, we are functioning in conformity with the Cabinet Mission's plan, but there is nothing in the Cabinet Mission's plan to prevent the States coming in at any stage they choose. You remember that the word used was 'reassemble'. 'Reassembling' means 'assembling previously'. Anyhow, as I pointed out on the last occasion, this whole Constituent Assembly is essentially a voluntary body and nobody can force you to come in at this stage or at that stage.

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JN: The basic and fundamental principle is whether the States come in or not. Obviously that is a vital matter and my own impression was that they would come in. Now that is the first matter to be decided. The question of going into other matters could hardly have been taken up on the last occasion. We were proceeding on the basis that at some stage they may come in, and, therefore, we are going into the kind of allocation, and method of selection and this thing has now been introduced. We can consider this matter probably, as Sir C.P. said, in regard to 60 seats. There is no question about it. With regard to others, there are certain minor adjustments<sup>7</sup> to be made to suit the convenience of States. There is no difficulty about it. It can almost be left to the Secretariats in consultation with the States concerned to make proper adjustments. The other question then arises, how the people are to be elected.

5. Patel had asked if any formal ratification was necessary.
6. The Nawab of Bhopal had said the States could join the Constituent Assembly only on the date fixed by the Cabinet Mission plan and accepted by the Princes, if they wanted to join it earlier, they would have to refer the matter to the Conference of Princes.
7. Ramaswami Aiyar had said that some States in South India and 300 States in North India had to send four representatives to the Constituent Assembly. So naturally the former wanted to be grouped with the South Indian States rather than with the North Indian States

JN: I should have thought that point was fairly clear.<sup>8</sup> The whole conception of the Constituent Assembly is the representation of the people concerned either in British India or the States. It is also desirable that the Governments of the States should be indirectly associated with the work of this Assembly. The difficulty apparently is that the Constituent Assembly draws its authority from diverse elements being formed and constituted in a variety of ways—elections, nominations etc. In fact, the nominated elements suffer from lack of prestige. They would not be on the same level as others. It should be, I imagine, quite easy for Governmental representatives and representatives of rulers to come in through some elective process, through legislatures or electoral colleges as envisaged by the Chancellor.<sup>9</sup> There will not be a distinction in the Constituent Assembly, as there was sometimes in our legislatures, between nominated and elected elements. I would suggest for your consideration that all the persons who come in should come through some elective process, which, as things are, will undoubtedly clear the whole difficulty about rulers and the nominees coming in certain proportion. . . . The difficulty lies both ways.<sup>10</sup> We have to get through with as large a measure of consent of the people of the States as well as of the constituted Government as possible. The principle that I suggested was that it should be in conformity with the rest of the Constituent Assembly that they should come through some elective process, either an electoral college or the properly constituted legislature. This elective process may be by means of the single transferable vote which gives an advantage to any particular group to send its representatives. It would be quite easy for Governmental representatives to come through the legislature in this process.

JN: The Chancellor has stated that where there are no legislatures,

8. The Raja of Bilaspur sought clarification regarding Patel's remark that the States were given representation on the basis of population.
9. The Nawab of Bhopal had suggested that at least 50 per cent of the representatives of a State or a group of States should be appointed by the legislatures and where legislatures did not exist by an electoral college appointed by popular bodies
10. The Raja of Bilaspur said it would be "very sad" if a representative sent in by the legislature did something that was not acceptable to the State Government.

some kind of electoral college will be formed so that the procedure might be more or less similar.<sup>11</sup>

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JN: The Constituent Assembly as constituted today does not represent even the Governments of the British Indian provinces. They are people chosen by the people.

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JN: Shall we proceed with the report of the Secretariats? We need hardly consider it in detail. The general principle may be approved, subject to such minor adjustments as may be considered necessary on consultation.

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JN: I have suggested that in the elective process, the procedure of single transferable vote may be adopted either through the legislatures or through the electoral colleges. If that principle is accepted, then we will consider other matters.

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JN: There are nine States with single seats and there are five groups with single seats.<sup>12</sup> As a matter of fact, if you accept the principle which I have suggested for your consideration, then how to apply it would have to be considered in relation to each State so that the machinery may be adjusted as far as possible. Conditions may differ in the States. One rule may not be applicable to all States.... You suggested that in cases where there are more than one seat, at least 50 per cent of the seats should be elected by the legislature or electoral colleges. I would suggest that for our guidance we may put down some figure that taking the totality of seats, two-thirds may be considered popular representatives and one-third others. How it should be adjusted will be done by each State. Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar said that he

11. The Raja of Bilaspur had suggested that some sort of formula should be evolved for this

12. The Nawab of Bhopal had stated that where there was only one seat it would be left to the Ruler to appoint the representative or have him elected by the legislature

had six seats and he suggested four and two.<sup>13</sup>

Jam Sahib of Nawanagar: I would rather leave the quota at 50:50.

JN: I am referring to the totality of the 93 seats. I am not referring to the different States.

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JN: Are we now considering the question of the totality of the States?

Nawab of Bhopal. Yes, 50 50 for each State.

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JN: You say at least 50. Your proposal is that—out of the 93 seats, whatever half of it is, 46½ or 47, should be elected and the rest nominated.

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JN: Therefore I say in regard to these 20 States, the proportion of 2/3 and 1/3 should certainly be followed whatever might happen in regard to the other States.

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JN: It seems to me that we have arrived at a stage when the matter should be discussed in some detail. Will it not perhaps facilitate business if we appoint some small committee, 2 or 3 from amongst us, to consider this matter?... I quite appreciate the delicacy and intricacy.<sup>14</sup> I know that naturally before any kind of formal decision is made, the States concerned have to know their reactions to it but what I was suggesting was that in order to facilitate our discussion we might examine the question a little more. It is one thing to try to see the whole picture and fit things into it, but when you see it in small parts, you do not see the whole picture.<sup>15</sup>

13. Ramaswami Aiyar pointed out a practical difficulty to this proposal and said that it would largely depend upon the 20 States like Hyderabad, Mysore, Kashmir and Gwalior

14. The Maharawal of Dungarpur termed it a rather delicate and intricate question

15. The Maharawal of Dungarpur referred to the Nawab of Bhopal's statement that the basis should be 50 50 for those States who were grouped

X

X

X

X

JN: There are two points, one is that some kind of electoral procedure might be adopted for all the States. Secondly, a rough indication of how many popular representatives there should be. Now what the Chancellor suggested was in regard to States having more than one seat. The proportion would be affected by the single seat constituencies. Therefore, if some general idea was worked out, it would facilitate our consideration of the subject because, although intricate and difficult, it is all a question of considering 20 or 30 cases.

X

X

X

X

JN: I do not think when we come to the actual detailed list, there is going to be a vast difference between what you have suggested and what some of us have suggested. I would therefore put it for consideration whether it would not facilitate our work in this matter if we ask our respective Secretariats and two members nominated by you and two by us to sit together and see what your proposals lead to and what ours lead to and then we meet at half past ten tomorrow morning. This body will see whether our differences are considerable. They could also consider a slight combination of the suggestion made by you and the one made by us. I think that at least 50 per cent should be popular representatives and that the others should come through some electoral process to be devised. May be that the Rulers concerned might nominate panels from which the others might elect. The Rulers' nominees also will come in and there will also be electoral process. Anyhow if we actually see the results of these suggestions worked out by the Secretariats plus some others, it may be easy for us to consider the position I do not want that we should reach final and rigid decision here. If we lay down the general principles it may be easy for the Secretariats to arrive at some conclusion. . . I am not for a moment saying that you should now accept anything. These two proposals should be considered in detail by the Secretariats. . . But it would be desirable to have two nominees of yours and two of ours there to meet the Secretariat this afternoon so that we can meet and consider this matter without prejudice.

X

X

X

X

JN: I think we might form a small committee to work in the Secretariat this afternoon and report to us tomorrow morning. . . Let us consider also what instructions we should give them. Let them work out these

proposals or any alternative proposals which between the two might strike them. It seems to me the fair course lies between the two proposals. At least 50 per cent should be popular representatives and others may come in through some electoral process, whatever that might be.... In fact, these elections in the States will necessarily be on a very limited basis. Even the legislatures have nominated members and then the franchise is limited. The electoral colleges are very limited too.... But in some States it is very limited. In effect, the nominated members will represent the constituency of the rulers. When we say 50 per cent popular representatives, we mean more or less other than rulers' nominees.

Nawab of Bhopal: There may be cases where the elected representatives will represent the constituency of the rulers and others not.

JN: Yes, it may be.

Maharaja of Patiala: We can suggest the names.

JN: I suggest Sir Gopalaswami Ayyangar and Dr. Pattabhi.<sup>16</sup>

16. The Chancellor also promised to depute two persons and the four nominees would meet Nehru the same afternoon

## 8. Negotiations with the Princes<sup>1</sup>

Jawaharlal Nehru: The Committee that we appointed yesterday met and after coming to some conclusions, they left it to Sir B.N. Rau to draw up the proceedings of the meeting, which he did.<sup>2</sup> A copy of this

1. Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the States Committee and the States Negotiating Committee held at New Delhi on 2 March 1947. *The Framing of India's Constitution, (Select Documents)*, (Nasik, 1966), Vol I, pp 704-720

2. At Nehru's suggestion a Joint Sub-Committee was appointed on 1 March 1947 which met the same day and worked out the details of the suggestions made by the Nawab of Bhopal and Nehru with regard to the election or nomination of the representatives of the States to the Constituent Assembly. It also discussed the mode of selection by single-member States, groups of States, multi-member groups of States and the residuary group.

was sent to the Chamber office and that report contains certain suggestions, variations or additions. Some of them are quite minor, one or two not so minor, but the whole point is that this report is meant to help us to discuss this matter. The report consists presumably of all that was said at the last evening's meeting of the Sub-Committee. It is just a basis for discussion. Copies are being typed and we will be getting them in a few minutes time. I will ask Sir Gopalaswami Ayyangar just to tell us more or less the basis of this report of the Sub-Committee... As I just said, there are certain points in it which, it is suggested by Sir B.N. Rau, should be changed and I will read it to you apart from one or two minor matters as Sir B.N. Rau gave it to me. .<sup>3</sup>

In the annexure the names of States or Groups are given. It is pointed out that instead of describing groups as Bharatpur Group or Datia Group, some geographical designation is to be given, such as Rajputana States, Central India States or Punjab States.

x

x

x

x

JN: What Sir Sultan Ahmed suggested is this.<sup>4</sup> Are we trying to correct the report, or are we considering the points?

x

x

x

x

Pattabhi Sitaramayya: The question of officials and non-officials did not come up yesterday.

JN: However it is immaterial.

x

x

x

x

Sultan Ahmed: You suggested that it should be 50.50.

JN: Do you want it to be added that it was suggested by me?

Sultan Ahmed: I think I am right in saying that you suggested it.

3. The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Sub-Committee read out by Nehru are not printed They may be found in *The Framing of India's Constitution (Select Documents)*, Vol 1, pp 722-725
4. Sultan Ahmed had justified the recommendation of the sub-committee that popular representatives should be elected by the elected element and the others by the nominated element The nominated element meant officials and non-officials Ramaswami Aiyar objected to this.

JN: I did suggest it, but the form of election will be an important matter.

X

X

X

X

JN: We are not considering the question.<sup>5</sup> It is stated here that the matter was left over to the main Committee . . . The only question is whether this matter came up before the Committee and whether the Committee decided to leave it over to the main Committee. If it did come up, it is properly there. I was not there. I cannot say anything about it.

Pattabhi Sitaramayya. He does not deny that it did come up.

JN: It may be put in this way: "Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya suggested that it should be left over."<sup>6</sup> . . This report is not for publication. Whether it is contained in the report or not, this question will have to be considered here. . . . Both need not necessarily agree on the issue.<sup>7</sup> Some members may think that they require special treatment and others may freely say that they do not . This is a record of the proceedings which states that this point was raised and it was considered that it was not a matter for the Sub-Committee.<sup>8</sup> It may be put in this way: "Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya suggested that Hyderabad and Kashmir may require special treatment. It was agreed that this was not a matter for the Sub-Committee".

Sultan Ahmed: I am referring to paragraph 8, last line: "The remaining representatives should be elected by . . ."

JN: That sounds like a shareholders' meeting of the Rulers.

X

X

X

X

Sultan Ahmed. We may drop the point.

5 Sultan Ahmed denied that the Committee had taken the stand that the cases of Hyderabad and Kashmir should be left to the main Committee for consideration as these States required special treatment

6 Sitaramayya had earlier suggested that they should not take up that question which was bristling with difficulties

7 The Raja of Bilaspur said the vital point was whether both the Committees agreed that these States deserved special treatment

8 The Raja of Bilaspur had pointed out that what was said was that it was not a matter for the Sub-Committee

JN: We will take up the point raised by Sir C.P.... Your point, Sir C P , is that so far as you are concerned, you do not like at all this idea of the nominated element electing some persons separately.

x

x

x

x

JN. He has suggested that it may be by single transferable vote.<sup>9</sup>

x

x

x

x

JN: It is really better that there should be a single transferable vote. There is much in what Sir C.P. said... .Let us consider the general principle then.<sup>10</sup> What are the alternatives? One is what is put down here. The other is a single transferable vote. The third I take it is that a certain proportion should be elected and a certain smaller proportion should not be elected.

x

x

x

x

JN: With that I think everyone will agree<sup>11</sup> But Sir N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar's point was different.<sup>12</sup> As Sir C.P. suggested in the case of Travancore the nominated element is almost purely an official element while in other places the nominated element may represent minorities, special scheduled classes etc. There is a difference between purely official and certain interests being represented.

x

x

x

x

JN. What do you say to this point, Dr Pattabhi?<sup>13</sup>

9. Gopalaswami Ayyangar had asked Ramaswami Aiyar what would be the process of election of the one or two representatives who were to be nominated by the Ruler of Travancore
10. Ramaswami Aiyar said that he did not accept the single transferable vote straightforwardly as it would bring into the Constituent Assembly a very strongly divided communal element from Travancore.
11. The Nawab of Bhopal had said that a Ruler must carry the people with him, otherwise he would not be able to function.
12. He had refuted K M Panikkar's argument and said that where direct election was not possible nomination by the Ruler could not be called a camouflage. It was a method of indirect election
13. He replied that if the Rulers approved of it, it must be accepted

X

X

X

X

JN: I would like to say that your argument stands except this statement about the 10%.<sup>14</sup> I think the proportion is about 25% or 30% of the adult population.

X

X

X

X

JN: I think we are limited to three proposals: one is this memorandum; the other is Nawab Sahib's suggestion that at least 50% should be elected and the rest presumably nominated; the third which I ventured to put forward that the elected element would be two-thirds . . .<sup>15</sup> If we have a general process of election for all, the method of election may be diluted somewhat to permit the official element to come in. If it is to be some Ruler's nominees and some elected, then the elected element should not be diluted.

X

X

X

X

JN: There is no question of principle involved in this.<sup>16</sup> As Nawab Sahib has said, we have to accept certain facts of the situation. We have stated that two-thirds should be popular representatives and that the others should come through some elected process. For my part, I would have no objection to a Ruler nominating all such persons. But then, I would suggest that the elected element should be much bigger, because as it happens even in the elected element, no doubt, the Ruler's choice and his influence would go a long way.

X

X

X

X

Pattabhi Sitaramayya: On the two-thirds calculation basis, we worked up to 54. We ought to have 60.

JN: 54 is really not two-thirds because two-thirds is 61.

14. The Nawab of Bhopal had said that his original proposal should be accepted as, after all, the Constituent Assembly and the provincial legislatures represented only by indirect election at the outside about 10 per cent of the whole population.

15. M A Srinivasan, a member of the States Negotiating Committee, asked whether the two-thirds should be non-officials.

16. The Maharawal of Dungarpur wished to know whether the right of the Rulers to nominate members was being objected to in principle.

X

X

X

X

JN: According to the plan suggested by Nawab Sahib, the elected number is 45. Two-thirds, mathematically speaking, is 62. But because of single-member constituencies and double-member constituencies, they work out to nearly 54, which is a middle figure between 45 and 62. So actually the difference is 9 more than 45, and 8 less than 62. The difference is really not very great...<sup>17</sup> I have no doubt whatsoever that the effort on both sides is genuine and there is a strong desire to bridge this gap although it may be that our approach to this problem somewhat differs. In actual result, the differences have been minimised. For my part, I am not very much interested in two or three seats here or there, but rather in the approach to the problem and that should be as nearly as possible in conformity with what some of us consider to be right. I must confess that with what Nawab Sahib said I do not feel there is very great difference. He has put it fairly. It is difficult for him and others present to commit many of the States who are not present. On the other hand, he has assured us that efforts will be made to add to the elected element. As it is here, in the single-member States the numbers of seats have been left out. There is no reason why they should be left out. When filled up, possibly the figures might go up considerably. In view of this, speaking for myself, I would suggest that without much further argument about the figures two or three, we might accept the general proposition as the Nawab Sahib has put forward that we should have a minimum of 50 per cent elected and that we should try to have as many more as possible. I hope the Chancellor will recommend this and will try to see that this proportion increases. We thought, as Dr. Patta-bhi put it, it would be very much in favour of the Princes themselves if this comes from them rather than from us.

X

X

X

X

JN: There are certain matters which have to be considered. First of all, how the elected persons will come in. Generally speaking, it has been said that they will come through the legislatures where they exist or through some other device... Well, the question arises about the election in the legislatures, whether they are elected by the elected members or by others also... I would suggest that now that you are having

<sup>17</sup> The Nawab of Bhopal had said that his proposition of 50 : 50 was the only proposition likely to find general acceptance and assured that a genuine effort was being made by them to cross the hurdle,

an elected bloc and a nominated bloc, it would be far better to confine election to the elected members of the legislature. The nominated element comes through the Rulers' direct nomination and the others come through the elected group...<sup>18</sup> That is a point. Generally speaking, we have been discussing the totality. Of course, there is no very hard and fast rule. I was going to suggest, in fact, that some kind of a small sub-committee might be appointed such as we appointed last night to consider these matters as they arise, in consultation, if necessary, with the Chancellor and the Constituent Assembly. What I suggested was that the elected members should only be elected by the elected members of the legislatures, as Sir C P. Ramaswami Aiyar said that he would fix it up in Travancore. That seemed to me the general trend of discussions yesterday too... This is a different thing<sup>19</sup> In the provincial elections to the Constituent Assembly, the Hindus and Sikhs in the N.W. Frontier Province were totally eliminated. The Muslims in Orissa were eliminated on the population basis...<sup>20</sup> That would apply to very few legislatures... I do feel a difficulty about this.<sup>21</sup> You will appreciate, I have no doubt you will, that once we put it that the elected members will be elected both by the elected element and the nominated element, and the rest will be nominated, it will have a tremendously bad impression. That even the elected element is not elected by the elected members of the legislatures, would have a very bad psychological effect. As it is, I fear that the elected element is small. If we add to that that the elected element also comes partly through the nominated element, it would be difficult I quite appreciate that these small groups, labour, Sikhs, etc., who are represented by nomination by the Rulers, should not be left out.<sup>22</sup> I would suggest that these should come through the Rulers' choice. The Rulers' nominees would represent them...<sup>23</sup> I do not know the figures for non-official nominated members. There

18. The Raja of Bilaspur had suggested that as long as the elected seats added up to a certain total, it would not be pressed upon each individual bloc of States sending a quota, also to send a quota which would correspond to 50% or more

19 K M Panikkar pointed out that in Bikaner, as the Sikhs could not come in by any process of election, certain persons would always have to be nominated

20 K M Panikkar repeated his argument that representatives of those communities which could not be elected to the State legislatures because of their small numbers would have to be nominated

21. Replying to K M. Panikkar, Vallabhbhai Patel said that election by nominated members would be a camouflage and suggested: "Let us have 25% in addition by this camouflage and your point will be met."

22. The Nawab of Bhopal had said that some interests like labour had no constituency and so they had to be represented by nomination by the Ruler

23. The Raja of Bilaspur asked. "Could they not vote or not be voted for?"

may be three or four or five. It is the principle I am worrying about. I would say that if an official stands, he can certainly stand. There should be no embargo on his coming in. I suggest that the principle might be agreed that the election should be by the elected members. I do not know whether any difficulty arises in particular places.

X

X

X

X

JN: I suppose difficulty might possibly come in, in single-member constituencies which desire to adopt the elective process....<sup>24</sup> Some such arrangement may be made because it is a single-member constituency. In regard to others, it may be clearly stated that the elected members shall vote. After all, we are going to have electoral colleges. How they are to be formed is another matter. The only way to fit in with the scheme is that the elected members should vote<sup>25</sup>

X

X

X

X

JN: I take it, of course, that there will be no restriction on candidates—anybody can stand, official or non-official . Paragraph 6 says:

It was agreed that.....may make a formal notification stating the names of the persons selected and cause it to be communicated to the President of the Constituent Assembly... .

X

X

X

X

JN: I suppose we should have a small Committee to go into various small matters.<sup>26</sup> If you like we can have the same Committee or any other committee you may choose, which can consult the Chancellor on the one hand if necessary and the President of the Constituent Assembly on the other for such details as it may be necessary to consider....I suppose the question of formation of electoral colleges will be considered by that Committee.

Nawab of Bhopal: I think it is entirely a matter for the States.

24 The Nawab of Bhopal said he supposed there the whole legislature would be voting

25 The Nawab of Bhopal agreed with this

26 Paitabhi Sitaramayya had asked what would happen to a State in which the Ruler did not wish to join the Constituent Assembly.

JN: It is a matter for the States, but many questions may arise and I suppose the States would like to observe certain uniformity; for instance, supposing an electoral college consists of nominated members only, then it will not be an electoral body....I am not suggesting any outside authority,<sup>27</sup> but I am only suggesting that various matters may arise which may overlap, and may concern some other issues too. It is a similar kind of position as to whether a person should be elected by the elected members or the nominated members. Instead of discussing this matter we may leave it to be considered by this Committee. Some time it may be necessary for H.H the Chancellor to refer the matter to the President of the Constituent Assembly.

Nawab of Bhopal: I have no objection to consultation but if it is considered that it will be binding....

JN: Binding on whom? I am not suggesting that. Obviously, in all these matters we are functioning in a new field. There is no constitution laying down what is to be done and so the more consultation there is the smoother will be the work.

x

x

x

x

JN: I think that it is quite enough. We have left out so far considering the special cases of Hyderabad and Kashmir. The difficulties that arise apart from other difficulties are that in both these States, elections recently took place and a large number of people of the principal organisations there did not participate in those elections. Now, if that Assembly there elects people, it does not represent a very large number of people, who did not participate. They would certainly take very great objection to it. I do not know whether it is possible to organise elections there for this particular purpose. It is, I understand, quite easy in Kashmir but about Hyderabad I do not know. Their representative is unfortunately not present. How are we to take a decision then? We can't take a decision in his absence but the point has to be raised.

x

x

x

x

JN: My point is that the elected legislatures there at the present moment are not anywhere nearly representative because the principal organisations concerned did not participate and in effect boycotted the election.

27. The Nawab of Bhopal had said as far as the States were concerned, there would be difficulty in introducing any outside authority.

I hope that so far as the election to the Constituent Assembly is concerned, some satisfactory arrangement may be devised. I think, Nawab Sahib, it would be helpful if you wrote to the two Governments....<sup>28</sup> There are two or three other matters. Firstly, what about the Committees? There are two Committees in which the Princes are deeply interested, one is the Union Powers Committee and the other the Fundamental Rights Committee. It seems to me that it will be very much to your advantage to participate through your representatives in these Committees right from the beginning; otherwise naturally things will have to be reconsidered afresh when certain conclusions are arrived at. You could of course suggest someone who could function there subject to any further decision in the matter....<sup>29</sup> At present there is one Committee—Union Powers Committee and the other is Advisory Committee which has split up into 5 Committees, the Fundamental Rights Committee, North Eastern Tribes Committee, North Western Tribes Committee, Excluded Areas and Minorities Committees. The Tribal Committees—I suppose—don't interest you so much. The Excluded Areas might interest you and the Fundamental Rights and the Minorities also. If you would like to send your representatives, the only way we can do it is that we can get the representatives nominated by the President. You can communicate with the President on the subject and he will nominate whomever you suggest. Presumably, the next meeting of the Constituent Assembly will be held about the 25th April. So far as the Committees, which I mentioned, are concerned, they propose to meet meanwhile. So far as the Constituent Assembly is concerned, the members of the States, if they are to participate, should be chosen by that date or preferably at the latest by the 15th April. That is nearly 6 weeks from now. I would suggest that this date might be mentioned to the States concerned. ...I suggest, Nawab Sahib, that in any circular your office might issue you might mention that the next meeting of the Constituent Assembly is taking place round about the 4th week or after the 20th April and it is desirable that the participating States should send their names to the President of the Constituent Assembly. There is one other matter before we part and that is a press communique to be issued. Apart from that

28. The Nawab of Bhopal agreed to do so

29. The Nawab of Bhopal replied that he would have to make a reference formally.

I think there is no other matter....<sup>30</sup> I think what Sir C.P. said correctly represents the position.<sup>31</sup>

30. Ramaswami Aiyar summarised the position. "That a corporate decision with regard to the States is expected to be taken in a Conference of Rulers. There is nothing to prevent an individual State wishing to participate in the Constituent Assembly doing so and that certain dates are suggested"
31. The meeting ended after Nehru read out the joint press communique. For the text of this see the next item

## 9. Joint Communique on Negotiations with the Princes<sup>1</sup>

The States Negotiating Committee of the Chamber of Princes and the States Committee of the Constituent Assembly concluded their deliberations this morning. They generally accepted the recommendations of their two Secretariats as regards the allocation of seats among the different States, and authorised the making of such minor modifications as are considered necessary by the parties concerned. They also agreed that not less than 50 per cent of the total representatives of States shall be elected by the elected members of legislatures or, where such legislatures do not exist, by other electoral colleges. The States would endeavour to increase the quota of elected representatives to as much above 50 per cent of the total number as possible.

2. It was decided to set up a Committee consisting of the following members to consider the modifications referred to above and other matters of detail that might arise from time to time and to report, if necessary, to the two Negotiating Committees:

1. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya
2. Sir N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar
3. Sir V.T. Krishnamachari
4. Sir Sultan Ahmed
5. Sir B.N. Rau
6. Mir Maqbool Mahmood<sup>2</sup> and
7. Mr. H.V.R. Iengar

1. Issued on 2 March 1947. *The Hindustan Times*, 3 March 1947, also printed in *The Framing of India's Constitution, (Select Documents)*, (Nasik, 1966), Vol. I, pp. 720-721.

2. Mir Maqbool Mahmood was at this time Secretary of the Chamber of Princes.

3. The States Negotiating Committee will place the above conclusions before a general Conference of Rulers and representatives of States for ratification at an early date.

**10. To the Nawab of Bhopal<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
10 April 1947

My dear Nawab Sahib,

Will you please refer to your letter dated the 1st April asking me to intimate to you the acceptance by the Constituent Assembly of the "general understanding reached between the two Negotiating Committees in regard to the allocation of States' quota of seats and the method of selection of their representatives in the Constituent Assembly and the fundamental points discussed at the meetings held on the 8th and 9th February and 1st and 2nd March 1947"?

2. In the course of the discussions between the two committees, I made it clear that a formal ratification by the Constituent Assembly was unnecessary and that our committee was only required to report the result of its negotiations with your committee to the Assembly. This report, giving an account of what happened at our discussions, will be made to the Constituent Assembly on the 28th April.

3. At our discussions we exchanged views on what you regarded as fundamental points; and, on the basis of the general understanding arrived at as a result of that exchange, the two committees proceeded to consider the question of the allocation of seats amongst the States and the method of selection and reached an agreement thereon. The general understanding and the agreement will be included in the report to be made to the Assembly.

4. The entry of the States' representatives into the Constituent Assembly has now become a matter of urgency, especially in view of the Prime Minister's statement of February 20th. I would, therefore, request you to be so good as to invite the States, which have not already done so,

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 10, pp. 181-182

THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AND THE STATES

to choose, without delay, their representatives in accordance with the agreement arrived at, so that they may take their seats in the Constituent Assembly from the next session onwards.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**11. To the Nawab of Bhopal<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
10 April 1947

My dear Nawab Saheb,

I have seen Sir Sultan Ahmed's letter of the 7th April addressed to Iengar on the subject of States' representatives on the Committees of the Constituent Assembly, particularly on the Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights etc. and the Union Powers Committee. Both these committees are meeting from the 14th April onwards and their reports have to be presented to the Constituent Assembly at the session commencing on the 28th April

2. You will agree that it is very important that these committees should have the advantage of considering the States' points of view on the matters referred to them before they submit their reports. I hope, therefore, that you will now send your recommendations to the President for nominations to these committees. In the meanwhile, I understand that the President is nominating Sir B L. Mitter and Sir V.T. Krishnamachari on the Union Powers Committee and Sardar K.M. Panikkar on the Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights etc.

3. I have, in a separate letter, explained to you that the ratification of the Constituent Assembly to the agreement reached between the two committees is not required and that it is, therefore, not necessary to hold up your recommendations for nominations to the committees.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

<sup>1</sup> *The Transfer of Power 1942-7, Vol. 10, pp 188-189.*

## 12. On the Report of the States Committee<sup>1</sup>

Sir, I beg to move:

The Constituent Assembly, having taken the Report<sup>2</sup> of its States Committee into consideration, resolves that it be recorded.

The Assembly welcomes the States representatives who have already been chosen and expresses the hope that other States who have not chosen their representatives will take immediate steps to do so in accordance with the agreed procedure.

I understand that copies of the Report have been circulated to all the Members; I shall not therefore take up the time of the House in reading that Report. That Report is a brief summary of the activities of the Negotiating Committee appointed by this House. We have tried to make it as precise a summary as possible and it shows what took place and what we did, so that the House may be acquainted with the procedure we adopted and all that we said on those occasions. I might add, however, that if it is the wish of the House and if Members desire to see a fuller report of our proceedings, there is a verbatim Report in existence and this Report can be consulted in the Library of the House. I say this because sometimes all manner of rumours get about and people are misled and sometimes people imagine that we are not trying to put all the facts before the public. We have nothing to hide in this matter; indeed we could not possibly do so from this House; and therefore the verbatim Report of everything that was said on the occasion that we met with the Negotiating Committee of the Princes is available for reference to any Member of the House in the Library. It is too long a report for us to have it printed and circulated, nor is it normally desirable to have such reports published in the public press. But there can be no secret as between the Committee of this House and the Members of this House, and therefore, while that document is not meant for publication, I should like to remind the Members that it is there to be consulted by any Members of this House in the Library.

The House will remember that this Committee was appointed for a specific purpose for fixing the distribution of seats of the Assembly not exceeding 93, and for fixing the method by which the representatives

1. Speech in the Constituent Assembly, 28 April 1947 *Constituent Assembly Debates, Official Report*, Vol III, 1947, 28 April to 2 May 1947, pp. 371-377.  
2. Not printed.

of the States should be returned to the Assembly. These were the definite directions given to us and we proceeded accordingly, but when we met the Negotiating Committee appointed by the Chamber of Princes, other questions were raised. We were confronted by various resolutions passed by organizations of the Princes. We informed them that we had no authority to deal with any other matter. Our authority was limited to dealing with these two specific matters. Indeed we went a little further. We said we rather doubted the authority even of the Constituent Assembly to deal with all manner of other matters, that is to say, the Constituent Assembly as it is constituted at present. But in any event we were so anxious to get going, so anxious to remove any misapprehensions that might exist, that some of us had further conversations with them and some doubts that they raised were removed in the course of those conversations; some questions that were asked were answered informally, personally if you like, on our behalf because it was not open to us to go beyond the terms of the mandate that you gave us. You will see a reference to that in the Report that is presented to you, in particular because—I am bound to make this point perfectly clear—a few important points were raised by them in the course of those discussions. As it happened, what I said in reply to those questions had more or less been said by me in this House before or by other Members of this House, and therefore, I had no difficulty in saying it to them because otherwise I would have had this great difficulty of saying anything which the House might not approve, or might disapprove as wrong. All of us have certain views in this matter and on one of the occasions when I addressed this House in connection with the Objectives Resolution, I referred also to the States and to the Princes and made it clear that while I, in my individual capacity, held certain views, those views did not come in the way of my stating what the Constituent Assembly stood for, and what its range of activities was going to be. I said then that, while we were deciding in favour of a Republic for the whole of India, that did not bar any State from continuing the monarchical form of government so far as that State was concerned, provided, of course, that it fitted in the larger picture of freedom and provided, as I hope, that there was the same measure of freedom and responsible government in the State. So when these questions were raised I had no particular difficulty in answering them because in effect they had been mentioned in this House previously.

What were those questions? First, of course, was—it was an unnecessary question—as to the scope of our work, that is to say, how far we accepted the Cabinet Mission's Statement of May 16, 1946. We have accepted it, and we are functioning in accordance with that State-

ment. There the matter ends. I do not know what future changes may take place and how these changes might affect our work. Anyhow we have accepted that Statement in its fulness and we are functioning accordingly.

That leads inevitably to another conclusion, viz., that such subjects, as did not come within the scope of the Union, were subjects to be dealt with by the Units—by the States and the provinces—and that has been clearly laid down in the Cabinet Mission's Statement. So we said there and we made that clear. What the Union subjects might or might not be is a matter for careful consideration by this House now. But any subjects which did not come within the scope of the Union subjects necessarily are subjects left over to the Units.

Further it was stated that the business of joining the Constituent Assembly or accepting the Scheme or not accepting it was entirely their own. As Mr. Panikkar has pointed out, there was no coercion, there can be no coercion either to a State, a province or to any other part of India, which is participating in this Assembly. There can be no coercion, except, of course, the coercion or compulsion of events and that is certainly a compelling factor and a very big factor which none of us can ignore. So there is no question of compulsion; but at the same time it is true that if certain Units or parts of India decide to come in, accepting their responsibilities, they get certain privileges in return, and those who do not come in do not get those privileges as they do not shoulder those responsibilities. That is inevitable. And once that decision has been taken by a Unit, State or others, other consequences inevitably follow, possibly widening the gulf between the two: that is the compulsion of events. Otherwise it is open to any State to do as it chooses in regard to this matter of coming in or not coming in. So that matter has been made clear.

The only other important matter that was raised in this connection was the monarchical form of government in the States. As I stated in this House previously, in the world today this system of rule by monarchy, whatever good it may have done in the past, is not a system that might be considered to be popular. It is a passing institution: how long it will last I do not know. But in this matter my opinion is of little account. What counts is what this Assembly desires in this matter: what it is going to do: and we have made it clear on a previous occasion that we do not wish to interfere in the internal arrangement of the States. It is for the people of the States to decide what they want and what they do not want. The question, in fact, does not arise in this Assembly. Here we are dealing with Union matters, subjects of fundamental rights and the like. Therefore this question of the monarchical

form of government in the States did not arise here and I told them that that so far as we were concerned we were not going to raise the particular subject here.

Lastly, there was the question or rather the misapprehension due to certain words in the Objectives Resolution of this Assembly, where some reference has been made to territorial boundaries being changed. The House will remember that that had no connection with the States as such. That was a provision for future adjustments as they are bound to be involved. Further it was a provision for suitable Units to come into existence, which can be Units of this Indian Union. Obviously one cannot have very small Units or small fractions of India to form part of the Union. Some arrangement has to be made for the formation of sizable Units. Questions arise today and will arise tomorrow even about the division of provinces. There is a very strong feeling about it. We are discussing today, though for other reasons, about the division of certain provinces like the Punjab and Bengal. All these have to be considered but this has nothing to do with the provision in the Objectives Resolution. The point has been settled in the Negotiating Committee that any changes in territorial boundaries should be by consent.

Those were the statements I made on behalf of our Negotiating Committee to the other Committee and those statements removed a number of misapprehensions and we proceeded ahead with the consideration of other matters.

Among the other matters was, firstly, the question of the distribution of seats. We decided to refer this matter to the two Secretariats—the Secretariat of the Constituent Assembly and that of the Chamber of Princes. We referred this matter, I think, at 1.30 p.m. one day. Those two Secretariats met, I think, at 3 p.m. the same day and at 5 p.m. they arrived at an agreed procedure. That was rather a remarkable thing which is worth remembering. It is true that the rules governing the distribution were to some extent laid down in the Cabinet Mission's Scheme—one seat per million, that is, 93 seats in all. Unfortunately, these matters of distribution are difficult and often arouse great controversies and arguments. Nevertheless these two Committees met together and I am very glad that the Secretariat of the Constituent Assembly was helped by the representatives of the States to come to an agreed solution within two hours. That showed that if we approach any of these apparently difficult problems with good will, we find solutions and we find rapid solutions too. I do not mean to say that that solution in regard to the distribution of these seats was a perfect one. Since the agreement was reached certain objections have been raised and criticisms have been made in regard to the grouping of the

States here and there. Ultimately we left it to a Sub-Committee—a joint Committee of our Negotiating Committee and the States Negotiating Committee—to consider this matter and to make such minor alterations as they thought fit and proper. Now because of these grouping difficulties, a number of States, which might be represented here, are not here. That is to say, the States concerned want to come in and they are quite prepared to do so but the group has not begun to function. Therefore individually they are prevented from coming in. Only yesterday I was informed that one important State, the State of Cutch, was eager and anxious to come in but they formed part of a group of Kathiawar and other States, rightly or wrongly, and till the whole group gets into motion, they do not know how to come in separately. This is a matter to be considered by the Sub-Committee. But the point I want to put before the House is this that in this matter as soon as we came to grips with the subject and gave up talking in vague generalities and principles or rights of this group and that group, we came to a decision soon enough and that is a good augury for our work in future, whether it relates to the people of the States or to the rest of India or to any group in India.

We, who meet here, meet under a heavy sense of responsibility—responsibility not only because the task which we have undertaken is a difficult one or because we presume to represent vast numbers of people, but because we are building for the future and we want to make sure that that building has strong foundations, and because, above all, we are meeting at a time when a number of disruptive forces are working in India pulling us this way and that way, and because, inevitably and unfortunately, when such forces are at work, there is a great deal of passion and prejudice in the air and our whole minds may be affected by it. We should not be deflected from that vision of the future which we ought to have, in thinking of the present difficulties. That is a dangerous thing which we have to avoid, because we are not building for today or tomorrow, we are making or trying to make a much more enduring structure. It is a warning, which the House will forgive me if I repeat, that we must not allow the passion and prejudice of the moment to make us forget what the real and ultimate problems are which we have to solve. We cannot forget the difficulties of the present because that come in our way all the time. We have to deal with the problems of the present, and in dealing with them, it may be, unfortunately that the troubles we have passed through all these years may affect us, but, nevertheless, we have to get on. We have to take quick decisions and final decisions in the sense that we have to act on them. We have to be realists and it is in this spirit of realism, as also

in a spirit of idealism, that I say, that our Negotiating Committee approached this task.

The House knows that some of the members of the Committee have been intimately associated with the struggle of the people of the States for their freedom. The more I have been associated with that struggle, the more I have seen that it cannot be separated from the all-India problem; it cannot be isolated. It is an essential and integral part of the all-India problem, all-India structure, just as the States are an integral part of India. You cannot separate them. And with all my anxiety to further the progress of the people of the States with such strength as is in me in my individual or other capacities, when I met the Negotiating Committee I had to subordinate my individual opinions because I had to remember all the time that I was representing this Constituent Assembly. I also had to remember that, above all, we had gone there not to bargain with each other, not to have heated argument with each other, but to achieve results, and to bring those people, even though they might have doubts, into this Assembly, so that they might come here and they might also be influenced by the atmosphere that prevails here. For me it was the solemnity of the task which we had undertaken, and not to talk in terms of results, or individuals or groupings, or assurances. What assurance do we seek from each other? What assurance is even this House going to give to anybody in India, except the assurance of freedom? Even that assurance will ultimately depend on the strength and wisdom of the Indian people afterwards. If the people are not strong enough and wise enough to hold together and proceed along the right path, the structure that you have built may be shattered. We can give no assurance to anybody.

With what assurance have we sought freedom for India all these years? We have looked forward to the time when some of the dreams that we were indulging in might become true. Perhaps, they are coming true, perhaps not exactly in the shape that we want, but, nevertheless, they will come true. It is in that conviction that we have proceeded all these years. We had no guarantees. We had no assurances about ourselves or about our future. Indeed, in the normal course of events the only partial guarantee that most of us had was the guarantee of tears and troubles, and we had plenty of that. It may be that we shall have plenty of that in the future too; we shall face them. This House will face it and the people of India will face it. So, who are we to give guarantees to anybody? But we do want to remove misapprehensions as far as possible. We do want every Indian to feel that we are going to treat him as an equal and brother. But we also wish him to know that in the future what will count is not so much the crown of gold or of silver

or something else, but the crown of freedom, as a citizen of a free country. It may be that a time may come whether he is Ruler or anybody else, he would consider it a privilege to be a free citizen of a free India and to be called by no other appellation or title. We do not guarantee because we guarantee nothing to anybody, but that is the thing which we certainly hope to achieve and we are certain to achieve. We invite them to participate in that. We welcome those who have come, and we shall welcome those others when they come. And those who will not come we shall say nothing about them. But, as I said before, inevitably, as things are, the gulf will widen between those who come and those who do not come. They will march along different paths and that will be unfortunate. I am convinced that, even so, those paths will meet again, and meet sooner rather than later. But, in any event, there is going to be no compulsion. Those who want to come, will come, and those who do not want to come, may not come. But there is this much to be said. When we talk about people coming in and people who do not come in, let it be remembered, as Mr. Govinda Menon said, that the people of the States—I say with some assurance and with some authority in the matter—want to come into this Assembly, and if others prevent them from coming, it is not the fault of the people, but brakes and barriers are put in their way. However, I hope that these questions will not arise in the future and that in the coming month or two nearly all the States will be represented here, and jointly we shall participate in the final stages of drawing up the Constitution.

I am placing this Resolution before the House to record the Report. There has been some argument about this matter too and people attach a great deal of importance to words and phrases and assurances and things like that. Is it not good enough that I have put it to the House? If it is not good enough, I may repeat what has been stated. Even if that is not good enough, what we have stated is there in the verbatim Report of the meetings; we have nothing to add to it, we shall stand by that. We do not go back. But the procedure to be adopted must be a correct procedure. When this Committee was appointed you asked us to report and we have reported. We had got to do something, and we tried to do that and did it. Now, if this matter was to come up for ratification before this House before it could be acted upon, obviously, representatives of the States who are here now would not have been here. They would have been sitting at the door-step or somewhere outside waiting for ratification, waiting for something to happen till they came in. That was not the way in which we understood our directions. We understood that we had to come to some honourable agreement and act up to it so that representatives of the States might come

in as early as possible. We were eager in fact that they should join the Committees of this Assembly,—the Advisory Committee, the Fundamental Rights Committee, the Union Powers Committee and the other Committees which we have formed. It is not our fault that there was delay. At the very first joint meeting of the Negotiating Committees we requested the States Committee to join quickly, indeed to send their representatives to these Committees of the Constituent Assembly as soon as possible. We were asked for assurance at every stage and there were delays. But the way we have understood your mandate was that we had to go ahead and not wait for ratification of every step that we had taken. We acted accordingly, and I am happy that some of the States' representatives are here today and I hope more will come. So the question of ratification does not arise so far as this Committee's work is concerned. The Report is before you. If you disapprove of any single step that we have taken, express your disapproval of whatever might have happened, or otherwise give your directions.

The resolution I have moved is for your adoption. I shall not go into the details in regard to the distribution of the seats and the manner of selection of the delegates from the States. It was a sort of compromise. Naturally it was my desire, as it was the desire of my colleagues, that the representatives of the States should be elected by the people of the States, partly because it was the right way, and partly because it was the way in which they could be fitted with the other elected elements of this House. On the other hand, I considered it right and desirable that the States governments should also be represented here to bring reality to the picture. The correct way and the right way ultimately will be for the State government itself to be representative of the people and then come in to represent them here. But we have to take things as they are. The States governments, generally speaking, do not represent the people in the democratic sense. In some places they partially represent them. Anyhow, we did consider it desirable that the States governments, as such, should also be represented though we would have liked the largest number of representatives to come from the people. Ultimately after a great deal of discussion it was decided that not less than 50 per cent of the representatives should be elected by the elected members of the assemblies where they exist, or by some other method of election which may be devised. We came to a compromise on this proportion, though we would have liked the proportion to be higher. Some of the States have actually acted as if the proportion were higher. I submit that this compromise that we came to was an honourable compromise for all parties concerned and I think it will lead to

satisfactory results so far as this House is concerned, and I commend the resolution to the House.

### 13. To the Maharaja of Bikaner<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
29th April 1947

My dear Maharaja Sahib,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your letter of the 24th April. I have read your statement to the press with great interest and appreciation.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan's intervention was completely uncalled for and improper also as he happens to be a colleague of mine in the Cabinet. It is not customary to criticise each other in public in this way. It is for this reason that I refrained from replying to him in any public statement. Evidently his code of conduct is different. Your statement, however, was as good a reply as any that could have been given.

2. The Report of our Negotiating Committee was placed before the Constituent Assembly today and I spoke at some length on it. You will no doubt read about it in the papers.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J N. Collection.
2. Sadul Singh (1902-1950); worked as Chief Minister, 1920-25; succeeded as Maharaja of Bikaner, 1943
3. In a statement on 24 April 1947, replying to the allegation of Liaquat Ali Khan that the States had succumbed to the pressure of Congress, the Maharaja said, "I can say that so far as the Bikaner State is concerned and also the other States which have decided to participate in the work of the Constituent Assembly, we decided to do so certainly not due to any pressure from any one, much less the Congress, but because we consider it to be in our own best interests as well as in the greater interests of India."

14. To the Maharaja of Alwar<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
12 May 1947

My dear Maharaja Sahib,<sup>2</sup>

I have your letter of the 8th May.

2. I have not seen the report of my speech in the Constituent Assembly in the press.<sup>3</sup> The points you have noted are more or less correct in so far as the Constituent Assembly is concerned.<sup>4</sup> That Assembly is a voluntary body and there can be no coercion nor does it intend in the making of its constitution to interfere with the internal arrangements of the States, their monarchical form of government or territorial boundaries. So far as the Fundamental Rights and the other structure of the Union are concerned, they would naturally apply to any State entering the Union. All this is correct in so far as the Constituent Assembly is concerned. But I should like to make it perfectly clear that this has nothing to do with my own views in regard to certain matters. There has been no change or reorientation in them. I have said nothing in the Constituent Assembly in April which I did not say there in December last because I realise that that Assembly has certain limited functions. I added then that obviously if any State does not enter the Constituent Assembly the gap between that State and the Assembly as well as the Union of India that follows will increase. I cannot conceive any State keeping out of the Union of India because of the compulsion of events. Nor can I conceive any State continuing to have an authoritarian form of government when the rest of India has free and democratic government.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 J.N. Papers, N M.M L

2 Tej Singh Bahadur (b 1911), Maharaja of Alwar, 1937-47, member of the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes

3. The Maharaja of Alwar had written that Nehru's statement in the Constituent Assembly on 28 April 1947, as reported in the press, represented a reorientation of his views since "the correspondence that passed between us last year."

4 The Maharaja welcomed Nehru's statement clarifying that the States would not be coerced into joining the Constituent Assembly, that monarchical form of government and internal arrangements in the States would not be interfered with, and that any future territorial adjustments would not affect the States. He added that Alwar State wished to maintain cordial relations with the Central Government

## 15. Telegram to Sarangdhar Das<sup>1</sup>

Your telegram<sup>2</sup> twelfth election Orissa States Constituent Assembly representatives. Electoral rules framed by council of rulers scrutinized here and found in conformity with agreement arrived at with us. Would therefore like you to exercise your full rights and influence to ensure election of real States representatives. If subsequently found that in practice genuine elections not held matter can be pursued by the regular process of election petitions.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1 16 May 1947. Constituent Assembly of India, Constitution Section, File No. CA 42/Ser/47, Ministry of Law, Government of India.

Sarangdhar Das (1887-1957); an active organiser of the States' people's movement in Orissa, elected in 1947 to the Orissa Legislative Assembly as a Congress party member; joined the Socialist Party in 1948, elected to the Lok Sabha in 1952.

2 He informed Nehru that the Working Committee of the regional council of the Orissa and C.P. States at its meeting on 12 May 1947 considered the situation created by several irregularities being practised in connection with the impending election. Some rulers were manoeuvring election of their men as people's representatives. The Working Committee wanted to know whether in such circumstances the election should be boycotted.

## 16. To the Maharaja of Manipur<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi

22 May 1947

Dear Maharaja Saheb,<sup>2</sup>

I have just received your letter of 14th May.<sup>3</sup>

1 Constituent Assembly of India, Constitution Section, File No. 84(3)/Ser/47, Ministry of Law, Government of India

2 Bodhchandra Singh (1908-1955) was Maharaja of Manipur from 1942 to 1947.

3 In his letter of 14 May 1947, the Maharaja of Manipur had said that instead of having a representative for Manipur, Tripura and the Khasi States as decided by the Chamber of Princes, there should be a separate representative for Manipur not on the basis of population but because of "peculiar geographical and topographical" considerations. There were diversified elements in the State and it had an area of more than 8,650 square miles.

2. I appreciate fully the importance of Manipur State in the Union of India from the geographical and strategic points of view. Also Manipur is a distinct cultural entity which I should like to preserve as such entity. I think your suggestion that Manipur should have a separate representative in the Constituent Assembly has some force. But unfortunately we have to function within the limits of certain rules laid down for us. These rules are based chiefly on population. To some extent some slight variation has been made in them by the Negotiating Committees. If these Negotiating Committees had been able to fit in Manipur for special representation, I would have had no objection whatever. But they have not done so and it is not easy for us to criticise them because of the limitations referred to above

3. I fear, therefore, that much as I would have liked to accede to your wishes, I am powerless in the matter at present. May I point out, however, that this is rather a technical matter and we need not attach too much importance to it? In effect we can easily arrange for consultations with your special representative so that your State's point of view may be kept in the forefront.

4. You know how rapidly the situation is developing in India. It is quite possible that big changes might take place long before June 1948. There is no time left for any one in India just to wait and see what happens. The future of Manipur State obviously lies with the Union of India. As you have pointed out yourself, Manipur can hardly be expected to defend itself unaided in case of troubles on the frontier. This business of defence must be shouldered by the Union. In other ways too the Union would, no doubt, help Manipur State to develop itself in many ways while retaining its cultural entity.

5. The Constituent Assembly is now reaching the final stages of its work. There can be no further delay or postponement; indeed we have to expedite that work. Our programme thus far has been to finish the constitution-making by October 31st of this year. But it may well be that circumstances will compel us to finish it a month or two earlier. It is obviously desirable for States to take part in this important stage of constitution-making. Those States that do not take part may, of course, come in later; but they will have lost an opportunity of taking part in the actual work of making the Union constitution. The Constituent Assembly will necessarily have to proceed with such representatives as it has.

SELECTED WORKS OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

6. I suggest to you, therefore, that you might agree to the proposals made by the Negotiating Committees for a joint representation of Manipur, Tripura and Khasi States. Mr. Guha,<sup>4</sup> the Tripura Minister, could formally represent you also. But, as I have stated above, we shall be happy to have some special representative of yours to advise us in regard to Manipur. He will not be, in the circumstances, a member of the Constituent Assembly. But he will be consulted in all matters concerning your State and he will prove very helpful. If this course is followed, your wishes will be generally fulfilled and at the same time the formal procedure adopted will also be adhered to. The matter is urgent and I trust you will communicate your decision at an early date.

7. I have read the papers you have sent me with interest.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. Girija Sankar Guha; advocate, High Court, Assam; joined Government service, 1926; Minister in Tripura State, 1945-48; member, Constituent Assembly, 1947.

**17. To the Gaekwar of Baroda<sup>1</sup>**

Mussoorie  
23 May 1947

My dear Gaekwar,  
I must apologise to you for the great delay in answering your letter. Owing to some unfortunate mishap it reached me very late.<sup>2</sup>

We were all very glad to welcome Baroda's representatives to the Constituent Assembly and they have already taken a notable part in our work.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter dated 7 March 1947 the Gaekwar of Baroda said he was glad that the negotiations for the representation of the States in the Constituent Assembly had led to "an amicable agreement" He added "This was not the time to insist on this safeguard or that to protect the interest of any individual Ruler."

## THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AND THE STATES

We are on the verge of great changes in India and, as is perhaps natural in the circumstances, we have to face considerable dangers. All manner of disruptive influences are at work. I have no doubt that we shall win through and establish a strong and free sovereign State in India. But we are likely to have a tough time during the next few months.

I quite agree with you that during these difficult days we should all try to pull together as far as we can. There is no future for any State in India, however big it may be, if it stays outside the Union. Within the Union it will have a large measure of autonomy and will participate in the progress of India as a whole.

The Asian Relations Conference was a tremendous success and everybody from India or abroad was surprised at what he saw. It was a wonderful exhibition of fellow-feeling among the peoples of Asia.

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## THE PRINCELY STATES

### I. The States People's Movement

## 1. Telegram to Begum Abdullah<sup>1</sup>

Deeply distressed to learn leaders' hunger strike<sup>2</sup> and their sufferings in prison. Kashmir people's cause our own and we can never forget them. In view of all circumstances and crises all over India at present earnestly recommend abandonment of hunger strike. Rest assured that we shall do our utmost. Hope to visit Kashmir myself later. Meanwhile arranging Congress delegation's visit.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. New Delhi, 5 March 1947. A.I.S.P.C. Papers, File No 94/1947, p. 195, N M M.L.
- 2 The political detenus in the Srinagar Central Jail started a hunger strike from 28 February 1947 demanding payment of adequate allowances for the maintenance of their families, supply of wholesome food, proper sanitary arrangements and repatriation of detenus to their home districts.

## 2. To Bakshi Ghulam Mohamad<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
5 March 1947

My dear Bakshi,

I have hesitated to write to you because I have been feeling deeply about your troubles and the troubles of the people of Kashmir and did not know exactly what to write. The recent news of the death of your father in painful circumstances, when you could not be near him and other members of the family are in prison, has distressed me greatly. I cannot say anything to you to give relief to you in your sorrow. But believe me that all of us have felt deeply about what you and others have gone through during these last eight or nine months. It has been a pain and a humiliation that we could not be of greater service. But circumstances have conspired against us and we have been caught in a net. I do believe that all the suffering in Kashmir has not been in vain and that good will come out of it. There is no reason to be disheartened. We are passing through a severe crisis all over India and one thing reacts on

1. J.N. Collection.

another. Relief will come to all. But before that comes we shall still have difficult times

I sent a telegram today to Begum Abdullah earnestly requesting her to ask the hunger-strikers to abandon their hunger strike. Just at the present moment I do not think it would have served any really useful purpose and the Kashmir State would have taken advantage of conditions in India. They cannot take advantage of this for long, and they will have to face the reckoning soon enough. Naturally I cannot say much in public; but you should have enough confidence in me to realise that I am doing my utmost.

I suppose that the Congress delegation will go fairly soon. It is at present hung up because of Ghani<sup>2</sup> who has got a bill in the Assembly. After this Assembly session is over in April, I should myself like to pay a visit to Kashmir.

You are in Lahore and you must be seeing what is happening there.<sup>3</sup> All this is very unfortunate. Perhaps the payment of this price is inevitable before freedom actually comes

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2 Abdul Ghani Khan moved in the Central Legislative Assembly on 14 March 1947 "that the demand under the head 'Broadcasting' be reduced by Rs 100". He contended that since 95 per cent of the Pathans were illiterate, the Peshawar Radio Station should broadcast in Pushtu

3 There were widespread communal riots in Lahore following the resignation of the ministry headed by Malik Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana.

### 3. The Presidentship of the All India States People's Conference<sup>1</sup>

A little over a year ago the States People's Conference met at Udaipur and they re-elected me President of the Conference.<sup>2</sup> The States people's movement was taking a new turn and the responsibility was great. I

1 Statement to the press, printed in *The Hindustan Times*, 11 March 1947.

2 The session of the All India States People's Conference had begun at Udaipur on 31 December 1945 and continued till 2 January 1946 under the presidentship of Nehru

accepted this presidentship because of the desire of my colleagues and also because of my great interest in the future of the people of the States I have all along believed that the problem of the States cannot be isolated from that of the rest of India. And so when India was on the verge of change the pressure of events in the States was progressively greater.

Unfortunately, owing to many preoccupations in other fields of activity I could not give as much time to the States people as I had hoped. Fortunately, my able colleagues who had especially devoted their lives to this work carried it on. The States people's organization grew in power and influence till it became, as it is today, a mighty and representative organ of the will of the people of the States all over India.

On my joining the Interim Government I felt I could not continue as President. The Vice-President, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, was naturally chosen to function as President in my place. But Sheikh Abdullah was in prison in Kashmir and Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya was elected to act as President. I continued as a member of the Standing Committee.

During this period of about six months Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya has shouldered this heavy burden with great ability and it has largely been due to his efforts that the work of the Conference has spread and grown in intensity. He has worked at the central office, he has toured many of the States, and he has specially interested himself in the building fund which is being raised to give a proper home for the headquarters of the Conference in Delhi. He has become even more than before a strong pillar of the States people's organization. Meanwhile, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah has lain in prison in Kashmir State and so have large numbers of his colleagues.

The question has now arisen as to who should be elected as President of the Conference for the coming year. Several names have been proposed,<sup>3</sup> men of ability, experience and long service in the cause of freedom and the States. Among them my name also appears I must withdraw my name as it is not possible for me to shoulder this heavy burden in the near future but that does not mean any slackening in interest on my part in the cause of the States people. If my colleagues so desire, I shall continue to serve on the Standing Committee.

I understand that nearly all others, whose names have been proposed for the presidentship, have also withdrawn their names. It may be that only one name is left at the time of election. In any event, I should like to say that at this juncture, more so than ever before, the right choice for us for the presidentship of the States People's Conference is Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. That would have been natural in any event, as

3. Among the names proposed for the presidentship were those of Nehru, Patel, Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Narendra Deva and Jayaprakash Narayan

he became Vice-President last year. But since then many things have happened in the Indian States. The most notable of these has been the movement in Kashmir and the fierce repression which it has encountered from the State authorities. For ten months now this conflict has continued and Sheikh Abdullah has become the symbol of freedom not only for the people of Kashmir but also for the people of other States.

It does little credit to the Kashmir State authorities that they should have behaved in this manner during these last ten months. It shows an amazing lack of wisdom and a want of appreciation of what is happening all over India. Even as I write a large number of the leaders of the Kashmir national movement, who lie in prison, are on hunger strike for lack of facilities. This hunger strike has lasted many days now and the condition of some of these prisoners is bad.

I have no doubt in my mind that it is proper and fitting for the Conference and its regional councils to elect Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as the President for the next session and the coming year.<sup>4</sup> Whether he will be available for the session or not, I cannot say. In any event this honour and responsibility should be cast upon him.

As Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah is not free to take part in our activities, it is essential that someone should be definitely chosen to function as Working President. The obvious choice for this is Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya who has been carrying on this work with energy and enthusiasm during these many months. He is representing the States people on the Negotiating Committee appointed by the Constituent Assembly. He is also on the Sub-Committee which is carrying on the Negotiating Committee's work. This work should be especially assigned to him on behalf of the States People's Conference. Also the building fund is his special preserve, though it is up to all of us to help him in this task. Apart from these two specific activities he should be requested to function as the Working President of the entire organization, help it with his constant advice and guidance and in other ways. He is a busy man and has many other activities to attend to. But I hope that he will agree to our request to shoulder anew, this responsibility.

We are on the eve of great changes in India and no one can doubt that the Indian States are also on the verge of great happenings. At no time previously was the functioning of the All India States People's Conference so important as it is going to be in the near future. All of us, therefore, who are connected with this great organization which is working for the freedom and betterment of 90 million people in India, must pull together and work hard to achieve the objectives we have in view.

<sup>4</sup> Sheikh Abdullah was elected President after all other candidates withdrew.

I trust that the Gwalior Conference<sup>1</sup> will give a brave lead which we can all carry to the far corners of India. The grave issues before us require all our joint courage, endurance and wisdom.

5. The All India States People's Conference had its annual session in Gwalior from 18 to 20 April 1947.

#### **4. To Hiralal Shastri:**

New Delhi  
12 March 1947

My dear Shastriji,

I have delayed answering your letter.<sup>2</sup> But in a sense you have already got my answer. I gave a good deal of thought to the matter and I discussed it with others, including Dr. Pattabhi, Jainarain Vyas and Balvantrai. Ultimately I issued the statement which you must have seen. I cannot see what good this will do us, but I am quite sure that this was the right step to take from every point of view.

We have to think in big terms now and we cannot afford to lose sight of major objectives in our preoccupation with some temporary advantage.

Dr. Pattabhi appreciated my suggestions and I am sure that we will have his full cooperation in the work before us. This work grows heavier and more complicated.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Hiralal Shastri Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. On March 5, Hiralal Shastri suggested that Pattabhi Sitaramayya should be preferred to Sheikh Abdullah for the presidency of the States People's Conference as it might be difficult for many to get along with Sheikh Abdullah. He added that Nehru should refrain from issuing a statement in favour of any particular individual, and that a contest should be avoided.

## 5. States Should Join the Constituent Assembly<sup>1</sup>

Any Indian State which does not come into the Constituent Assembly now will be treated as a hostile State by the country. Such a State will have to bear the consequences of being so treated.

Our aim at the moment is to liberate whatever part of India we can and we shall then deal with the question of getting independence for the rest. India's march towards freedom would brook no more obstruction.

As you know, Sheikh Abdullah was elected to preside over the session but he could not do so because he is behind prison bars. When I think of it I hang my head in shame. All I can say now is that Kashmir is like a flame in my heart. Some day it will bring forth some result.

At this critical juncture we should not lose our temper, as it would only harm our cause. Everything has to be viewed as part of a bigger whole and not individually. There are important decisions to be made. The time is past for passing resolutions and expressing views. We have to chalk out a line of action and then follow it. Mere expression of sentiments is of no use at all.

It is unfortunate that there has been bloodshed in the country during the past few months. It is our duty to end this bloodshed. But I repeat that we have to advance in spite of strifes. They might block our progress but they cannot stop us altogether. But for these strifes, we could have devoted all our attention to vital questions like the removal of poverty.

I had welcomed the declaration made by the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes last year urging the States to initiate popular reforms<sup>2</sup> even though they did not come up to expectations. But even these limited reforms are not put into effect. The declaration remains by and large merely a paper declaration. The Constituent Assembly is now engaged in framing a new constitution for a free India. Acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's plan was—and still is—a step in the right direction.

1. Address to the All India States People's Conference, Gwalior, 18 April 1947. From *The Hindu*, 20 April 1947.
2. At the 20th session of the Chamber of Princes held in Delhi on 17 and 18 January 1946 the Chancellor, the Nawab of Bhopal, had made a declaration on constitutional developments in the States in a speech on a resolution reiterating that the Indian States fully shared the general desire in the country for the immediate attainment by India of her full stature and would make every possible contribution towards the settlement of the Indian constitutional problem.

Representatives of the Indian States and the Muslim League have not yet participated in the Constituent Assembly. The League has not entered the Assembly despite frequent invitations. The door is still open for the League but I want to make it clear that the Assembly will go ahead with the task of framing a constitution despite everything. Such constitution-making was necessary even previously but in the present context—after the British Government's announcement of the decision to quit India—it is all the more urgent. The Congress has made it clear that no part of India will be compelled to join the Union against its wishes<sup>3</sup> and if any part of the country wants to remain out of it, it is welcome to do so. We on our part will then decide what sort of relations we shall have with them.

Rightly or wrongly some agreement has been arrived at between the Negotiating Committee of the Princes and the Negotiating Committee of the Constituent Assembly on the method of selecting the States' representatives for the Assembly.<sup>4</sup> You must bear in mind that the Constituent Assembly is part of the Cabinet Mission's plan and has to work within its limitations. I myself wish it were possible to work on an independent plan of our own. But the question is not what is desirable or desired but what is possible and practicable under the circumstances. It is not possible to ask the Prajamandals in the various States to send up their own representatives to the Constituent Assembly, as the Assembly itself is a creature of the British plan and is bound by its limitations. One of the limitations is that States' representatives can come into the Assembly only through the door held by the Princes.

When the agreement was reached with the Princes' Negotiating Committee it was made clear that final approval would have to come from the people of the States. It is true that certain things were accepted. Though we did not like them, we accepted them only because we felt it would facilitate the entry of the States into the Constituent Assembly.

3 The Working Committee, which met on 6, 7 and 8 March 1947 at Delhi, welcomed the decision of a number of States to join the Constituent Assembly. It also resolved that "any province or part of a province which accepts the constitution and desires to join the Union cannot be prevented from doing so. Thus, there must be no compulsion either way, and the people will themselves decide their future."

4 It was agreed that fifty per cent of the representatives would be nominated by the rulers and fifty per cent elected. It was also decided that while the rulers of the States would issue formal notifications declaring the names of persons elected or nominated to the Constituent Assembly which would be communicated to the President, the Secretary of the Constituent Assembly would issue a formal invitation to the representatives to attend the session.

The Congress has been very much opposed to a division of India but has recently on practical considerations passed a resolution demanding the division of the Punjab.<sup>5</sup> It did so because there was no way out of the situation. The question here again was not of desirability but of facing realities. The same thing applies to Bengal.

We were not satisfied with the method of selecting the States' representatives but we had to concede certain points, because we knew that if the States joined the Assembly, the work would be finished more easily. I commend you to accept the agreement arrived at between the Negotiating Committees

All the Princes do not belong to the same category. There are some who have done the right thing and have declared their willingness to come into the Constituent Assembly.<sup>6</sup> They deserve to be congratulated. Others are moving slowly putting obstacles in every possible way.<sup>7</sup> They are finding all manner of excuses and demanding all sorts of terms and conditions before entering the Assembly. I do not like this shopkeeper's mentality. This bargaining spirit will not do good to the princes. It is a very shortsighted policy which will result in creating enmity between them and the rest of India

All those who do not join the Constituent Assembly now will be regarded as hostile States and they will have to bear the consequences of being so regarded. Our aim at present is to liberate as much of India as we can—half or three-fourths—and then to deal with the question of independence for the rest. I know we have had to make a lot of concessions. But sometimes one has to pay a high price in the interest of the country's larger interest.

It is the duty of the Prajamandals to demand the setting up of Constituent Assemblies in their respective States to frame their own constitutions.

5 At a meeting of the Working Committee held on 6, 7 and 8 March 1947 at Delhi, it was resolved that the tragic events in the Punjab for six weeks—an attempt to break a popular ministry and form a new one had led to violence and agitation—demonstrated that a settlement would necessitate a division of the Punjab into two provinces.

6 Brojendralal Mitter, Dewan of Baroda State, prepared the ground for the States joining the Constituent Assembly. On 11 April 1947 the Maharaja of Bikaner announced that Baroda, Udaipur, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Patiala, Rewa and Bikaner had decided to send representatives to the Constituent Assembly.

7 Among the leading Indian States which had not yet decided to enter the Constituent Assembly by this date were Hyderabad, Mysore, Travancore, Bhopal and Kashmir.

The Political Department has succeeded in misleading a number of States. Speaking as a Member of the Interim Government I want to make it clear that the Interim Government is unaware of the activities of the Political Department. Officials of the Political Department act secretly and mysteriously. Judging by their activities, it seems that they are interested in dividing the country not into one or two bits but into one hundred or more bits.

The Jamsaheb of Nawanagar has just visited London. If he thinks the future plans of India are to be laid in London, he is very much mistaken.

## **6. On the Amendments to the Resolution of the States People's Conference<sup>1</sup>**

As for the amendment moved by Mr. Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq<sup>2</sup> suggesting that people of the Indian States should be asked by the Constituent Assembly to directly send their representatives, I would like to point out that the Cabinet Mission's plan has not provided for such entry of States' representatives into the Constituent Assembly. But after two months when we know definitely who are coming into the Assembly and who are not, then the Constituent Assembly may be compelled to consider such a course of action.

As for another amendment seeking to replace the word "hostility" in the last line of the resolution by the word "opposition" on the ground

1. Speech at a meeting of the General Council of the All India States People's Conference, Gwalior, 19 April 1947. *The Hindustan Times*, 20 April 1947
2. (1912-1971); courted arrest in the agitation against the Kashmir Government in 1938; Chairman, National Conference, 1939; Development Minister, 1948-51; elected President of the State Constituent Assembly in 1951; Health and Education Minister, 1953-57, resigned from the National Conference in 1957 and formed the Democratic National Conference and was its leader till its merger with the National Conference in 1961; Chief Minister, Jammu and Kashmir State, 1964-71.

that the former word is unduly strong and connotes bitterness, I do not accept it.<sup>3</sup>

The question is not one of mildness or otherwise. The proposition is that the Princes who continue to keep out of the Union are hostile to the Union. There is no use mincing words. We must say frankly what we feel about it.<sup>4</sup>

I do not mind the amendment moved by Mr. Sarangadhar Das adding the proviso to the resolution stating that where there is no well-established Legislative Assembly in States the only suitable machinery for election of representatives is the regional council of the All India States People's Conference.

3. Nehru, who negotiated the agreement with the Princes, sponsored the resolution on them on 19 April 1947. The resolution read "...The Conference congratulates those State Governments which have already taken steps to cooperate with the Constituent Assembly, in regard to others, it calls upon them to rise up with their people and declare their partnership in the great work of framing a constitution for the Indian Union. Continued refusal to do so can only mean hostility to the conception of Indian freedom and must be treated as such by the people of the States"

4 This amendment was withdrawn.

## THE PRINCELY STATES

## II. Miscellaneous

**1. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
6 March 1947

Dear Lord Wavell,

Information<sup>2</sup> has reached me that certain instructions have been issued by the Political Department to weed out and destroy some of the records in their custody and to transfer some records to other people; further that the Records Office at Delhi has been asked to transfer the so-called "Crown" records, which comprise matters relating to the States, to the British High Commissioner in India.

2. I do not know how far this information is correct. I hope it is not so because these records must contain information of great historical value and they should not be destroyed or transferred to other hands. May I beg of you to inquire into this matter and to stop any such vandalism of valuable material? In any event I hope the matter will be fully considered before any step is taken.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 9, p. 873.

2. In an unsigned and undated official note to London it was said that steps had been taken in the various departments to remove or destroy files that were likely to cause immediate political embarrassment on the coming into office of the new members, or which could be used to document a history of British exploitation of India.

**2. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
18 March 1947

Dear Lord Wavell,  
Thank you for your letter of the 15th March 1947 with reference to

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 9, pp. 970-971.

the action being taken by the Political Department in regard to their records.<sup>2</sup>

I appreciate what you say, but I am rather apprehensive that useful records might be unknowingly destroyed. I suppose the process of weeding out and destruction is entrusted to some member of the staff of the Residency or Political Agency. Such persons are not likely to possess much historical knowledge or be in a position to judge the historical or cultural value of the documents. May I suggest that some eminent historian be requested to supervise this process of weeding out? This might take a little more time but this delay should not come in the way of anything.

Probably the best course would be to collect all the records in the Imperial Record Department in New Delhi for examination by a group of competent persons.

It is not quite clear to me why any of these papers should be transferred to the custody of the U.K. High Commissioner in India. This transfer, I suppose, is on the presumption that the U.K. High Commissioner will be the legatee of the Crown Representative in regard to such matters. All these old papers relate to a period when there was no Crown Representative and when the Government of India was in charge of such matters. The fact that about ten or eleven years ago the Crown Representative's office and functions were separated from those of the Governor-General-in-Council does not, I take it, put an end to the Government of India's interest and responsibility in regard to these papers.

I would suggest therefore for your consideration that these records and papers be sent to the Imperial Record Department, full facilities being offered to all concerned to consult them there. Subsequently they can be closely examined by competent historians.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2 Wavell had written that such records of the Residencies and Political Agencies as possessed no historical interest and were patently valueless for future reference were being weeded out and destroyed under capable supervision. The rest were being transferred to the custody of the British High Commissioner in India to be classified at leisure.

3. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
9 April 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

As you know, I am deeply interested in the future of the Indian States, more specially from the point of view of the people of the States. Unfortunately the Political Department works in secret and no one knows what it does. Even the Members of the Interim Government remain in ignorance of the activities of the Political Department, although these activities are often of vital significance to the future of India. My own experience has been that representatives of the Political Department encourage reaction in the States and frown upon progressive tendencies. Because of these activities, the gap between what is called British India and the Indian States widens.

2. During the past few months I have often addressed Lord Wavell about the Political Department and have requested him for information. Sometimes some little information has been supplied, but this has seldom been adequate. I have addressed him particularly in regard to Bastar State.<sup>2</sup> This State is large in area but sparse in population. It is full of very valuable mineral deposits. At present the Ruler is a minor and the Government is completely controlled by the Political Department. For some time past there have been rumours of all manner of concessions to Hyderabad State in Bastar. These include mining rights and control over railway lines. In effect Bastar becomes an economic vassal of Hyderabad. Hyderabad itself is one of the most backward and feudal States in India and it is odd that it should be entrusted with the development of Bastar. The Central Provinces Government, which adjoins Bastar, will be affected by any such concessions to Hyderabad. It seems particularly unfortunate that vital agreements should be entered into by the Political Department when the Ruler of the State is a minor. I beg of you to prevent any such developments which might have serious consequences. At a time when the whole future of India, including the States, is being fashioned any binding agreements of this type may well come in the way of other arrangements. I understand that some steps are contemplated also in regard to Berar and that this province will be handed over to Hyderabad State. How far this is true I do not

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 10, pp 160-161.

2. See *Selected Works (Second Series)*, Vol. 1, pp 282-284 and 287-288

know. But if there is any truth in this statement, it will be bitterly resented by the people of Berar.

3. My difficulty is that we function completely in the dark in regard to these very important developments affecting the States. I doubt if there is anyone in India, whether among the Rulers of the States or the people of the States, who has any faith in the present set up of the Political Department. Innumerable complaints reach me and there is no way to find out the truth. I suggest that some arrangement should be made so that far greater publicity could be given to all activities connected with the States, and for this purpose the present set up should be changed.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 4. Retrocession of Gilgit<sup>1</sup>

It seems to me that the proper time for the retrocession of Gilgit would be spring next year.<sup>2</sup> By then the picture of the constitution of the Indian Union will be much clearer as also Kashmir's association with it. It will be far easier then to consider the problem in all its aspects. This in no way prejudices the claims of Kashmir. The argument based on the winter climate is not strong and offers no real difficulty in the late spring. I would therefore urge that this question be reconsidered later.

1. Note, 10 April 1947. Ministry of External Affairs, File No. 267-CA/47, pp 7-8/notes, National Archives of India.

2 To deal with the possible threat to Kashmir from Russia, the British Government had, by an agreement with the Kashmir Government, taken over the administration of Gilgit for sixty years beginning from 1935, at the end of which it would revert to the Government of Kashmir. In view of the impending transfer of power and to speed up the withdrawal of British personnel in Gilgit, the Political Department felt that the agreement should be terminated by 1 September 1947.

## 5. Corfield's Record of Interview with Nehru<sup>1</sup>

I had an hour's talk with Pandit Nehru on the 26th instant at his request. I have also received an invitation from Sardar Patel for a talk tomorrow. The main points covered during my talk with Pandit Nehru are as follows:—

I said I had been pleased to see in that morning's paper a statement regarding the report of the Committee of the Constituent Assembly which had held discussions with the States Negotiating Committee, and that in this report the complete freedom of choice for the States in regard to entering the Assembly had been stressed. Pandit Nehru said that the report would be laid before the Assembly on the 28th,<sup>2</sup> and suggested that in spite of this freedom of choice it would be beneficial not only to the States but also to the work of the Constituent Assembly if States representatives were included at once. He said that the inclusion of Sir B.L. Mitter and Sir V.T. Krishnamachari in the Union Powers Committee had been of great value, as they had been able to point out certain errors and omissions which could only be apparent to States representatives.

I then explained to Pandit Nehru the advice which I had given to States about entering the Constituent Assembly, and he did not dispute its propriety. I pointed out that so long as the States were united and neutral they were a stabilising factor, but now that they had ceased to be either they must choose as soon as possible whether to join a Constituent Assembly or be independent; it seemed entirely legitimate however in view of the statement of the 20th February that any State, which did not wish to decide at once, should await His Majesty's Government's decision regarding the authorities to which they proposed to hand over in June 1948. Moreover, there were already a number of States representatives in the Constituent Assembly and they were quite capable of putting forward the States point of view in the meanwhile. An immediate increase in their numbers could hardly affect the results especially in the narrow sphere of Union subjects. It was pointless therefore in my view to hurry the States which had not yet decided to send representatives.

Pandit Nehru mentioned the alleged reactionary influence of the Political Department. I pointed out that for many years we had been blamed by British India for not interfering in States enough and for not

1. 26 April 1947. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 10, pp. 461-464.

2. See *ante*, section 5, item 12.

pushing them along the road to democracy. Equally strong criticism (but not so public) had emanated from the States for interfering too much and forcing upon them democratic measures which were contrary to indigenous desires and needs. Before I could point the moral, Pandit Nehru appreciated that these criticisms cancelled out.

I further pointed out that as a semi-diplomatic organisation we were precluded from using publicity to defend ourselves; but our consciences were quite clear. In fact, if it had not been for our influence, there would by now have been less association of the people with the administrations in Indian States I had myself prepared a model constitution act for medium States in 1938, which though now out of date had been used by a number of States as a basis for their political advance.

Pandit Nehru then said that certain Rulers had alleged that though they themselves were anxious to advance they had been advised by the Political Department to go slow. I said this was an 'old story', and we were well used to being the shield behind which some reactionary Rulers were content to conceal their own inclinations. Pandit Nehru did not dispute this, and I thought it politic not to mention that for many years the most advanced constitution in an Indian State (except for Mysore and Travancore) was the one framed by Sir Bertrand Glancy,<sup>3</sup> a previous Political Adviser, for Kashmir.

Pandit Nehru asked for my opinion regarding the future position of Indian States in the new India. I suggested that their future depended entirely on developments in British India. If British India remained stable in the form of one, two or at the most three Unions, I had no doubt that all the States would adhere in due course and their governments would gradually conform more closely to that of neighbouring provinces: but if British India disintegrated the future of the States would be entirely different. Much would in my view depend on the extent to which the existing governments in India could provide security of life and limb in their respective areas during the next two years.

As regards the number of State units that would be likely to survive I thought that only about ten or twelve had inherent survival value: composite units would very soon lose their Indian State character: and the only units which could afford temporary independence were those which had or could negotiate an outlet to the sea.

Pandit Nehru enquired how I thought the question of Berar could be settled. I suggested that if Hyderabad came into the (Hindustan) Con-

<sup>3</sup> Bertrand Glancy (1882-1953); entered I.C.S. in 1906; served in Foreign and Political Departments, Political Adviser to the Crown Representative, 1938-41; Governor of the Punjab, 1941-46.

stituent Assembly a sub-committee could be formed therein including representatives of Berar and Hyderabad. If Hyderabad did not come in, the Constituent Assembly might appoint a negotiating committee of, say, two Berari representatives and a Member of the Interim Government who was also a member of the Constituent Assembly. Pandit Nehru enquired how the Hyderabad State subjects could be associated, and I suggested that the Hyderabad Assembly could choose one negotiator on behalf of the State.

Pandit Nehru agreed that the Crown Representative should confine his efforts to providing a forum for negotiation, and that no settlement which was not made direct between Hyderabad and British India would be of the slightest value.

As regards the nature of the settlement Pandit Nehru could not see why Hyderabad should want any outlet to the sea. I suggested that this depended on the scope of Union subjects and whether Hyderabad came into the Union. As a settlement about Berar might have to precede conclusions on both these questions it seemed that Hyderabad would be wise to protect their economic position, until a general agreed settlement had been reached.

I raised this question myself and stated that there was nothing sinister in the negotiations with Hyderabad, and that the Central Government departments concerned had been taken into the fullest confidence.

Pandit Nehru appeared to accept this, but suggested that it was dangerous to link Bastar with an inefficient place like Hyderabad. I demurred and said I had good technical opinion to support the view that the Hyderabad Irrigation Department maintained a higher standard than that of even the well-run province of Madras, that Hyderabad's plan of industrial development was of the highest order, and that its new industrial area had been laid out in accordance with the best technical advice, including town planning and housing of labour. I could not see how Bastar interests would suffer from a railway run by Hyderabad to extract iron ore. Incidentally the Hyderabad State Railways were also an efficient concern.

I found Pandit Nehru very much more receptive than during my last interview with him in October, last year, and I am glad that contact has been renewed. Pandit Nehru did not comment on my explanation of the contraction of paramountcy, the gradual withdrawal of local Political Officers and the fadeout of the Political Department.<sup>4</sup>

4. Mountbatten noted on this record: "Most encouraging. Does Pt Nehru still want a meeting between the three of us?"

## 6. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
1st May 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

On the 6th March 1947 I wrote to Lord Wavell regarding the destruction of records by the Political Department.<sup>2</sup> On the 15th March he was good enough to send a reply to me on this subject. I again wrote to him on the 18th March.<sup>3</sup> To this I had no reply, no doubt because of the change in Viceroyalty soon after. Meanwhile information continues to reach me about the destruction of these records. This information comes to me from various sources, including Ministers of States, and it has been pointed out that many important records are thus being destroyed. I would beg of you to consider this matter, for it would be most unfortunate if any record important from the historical point of view or from the point of view of common subjects between the Government of India and the States is destroyed. I can hardly imagine that the staff of the Residency is competent to judge of the historical value of records. I have suggested, therefore, that this destruction should stop and all the records should be sent to the Imperial Record Department in New Delhi for examination by a group of competent persons, including historians. Delay in weeding out papers will not injure anybody, but if a paper is once destroyed, it cannot be replaced.

Further I have pointed out that it is by no means clear to me why any papers from the Political Department or the Residencies should be transferred to the custody of the U.K. High Commissioner in India. The relations of the States in the past for a very large number of years were directly with the Government of India, as constituted then. A change was brought about by the Act of 1935, when the Crown Representative took charge of the Political Department. This did not put an end to the Government of India's concern with these papers or the matters referred to therein.

Indeed the Political Department has been in the past, and is, I believe, even now, financed by the Government of India and all the property of the Political Department or the Residencies necessarily belongs to the Government of India.

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 10, pp. 514-517.

2. See *ante*, item 1.

3. See *ante*, item 2.

An A.P.I. message published in yesterday's papers states that steps are being taken to abolish Residencies and Political Agencies in States. It is said that this is a corollary to the liquidation of paramountcy. Further, that the States will correspond directly with the Departments of the Government of India or the provinces. I have also just seen a memorandum issued by the Political Department issuing instructions about certain changes of procedure in regard to direct correspondence of States with the Central Departments.

All these steps that are being taken in the change of procedure vitally affect the Government of India and it is surprising that the Government of India should not be consulted in regard to them before any decisions are taken or orders issued. So far as I know, separate Departments of the Government of India are also not consulted in any way. The relations of the Crown and the Government of India with the Indian States cover a great variety of matters of common concern to States and British India, such as Railways, Posts and Telegraphs, Currency, Customs agreements, supplies of essential commodities, such as food, cloth, etc. etc. Whether or not any State accedes to the Union, some arrangements will have to be made between the State and the Government of India for the continuation of existing arrangements in regard to these matters of common concern until new arrangements are made. At a time when many commodities are in short supply, this is even more necessary and is equally in the interest of both sides.

The Cabinet Mission itself contemplated some such course for the interim period before the coming into operation of the new constitutional structure.<sup>4</sup> The statement of the 20th February 1947 makes it even more imperative that pending the formulation of new relations the existing treaties and agreements should continue in the economic, fiscal and administrative fields.<sup>5</sup> This seems to be inescapable if we are to avoid a breakdown in the administration in many spheres affecting the States as well as British India.

4. In a memorandum to the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes on 12 May 1946, the Cabinet Delegation suggested that during the interim period the States would have to conduct negotiations with British India for regulation of matters of common concern to avoid administrative difficulties, and for better understanding between the States and the Government.
5. Regarding the Indian States, the statement of 20 February said that the British Government would not hand over their responsibilities under paramountcy to any government of British India, and for the intervening period, the relations of the Crown with individual States might be adjusted by agreement.

The question of paramountcy does not arise in this connection. We have to distinguish clearly between economic, administrative and fiscal matters which will, in any event, continue to concern both British India and the States and the special rights and obligations of the Crown, such as the right of interference for misrule, deposition or limitation of powers of a Ruler, succession, honours, provision of military aid in support of a State, etc. It is about the former that I am writing to you. I am sure you will agree that the relations between British India and the States have to continue in a properly arranged manner when power is transferred to Indian hands. To break up the existing machinery of the Political Department and the Residencies, without anything taking its place, would be to encourage chaotic conditions. The destruction of the records of the Political Department would add to the confusion.

The proposal that there should be direct correspondence between the States and the various Departments of the Government of India will also lead to the encouragement of disruptive tendencies in the economic life and administration of the States and of British India. It seems odd that individual Departments of the Government of India should deal directly with a very large number of States in regard to numerous subjects without some machinery for coordination and without the benefit of an agency with local and regional knowledge.

I would, therefore, request you to have the destruction of records now in progress stopped; also, to suspend the present arrangements of the abolition of Political Agencies and the other procedure that has been suggested by the Political Department, in regard to direct correspondence between States and the Government of India Departments. These matters should be fully considered by the Government of India, in consultation with the Political Department, before any final decisions are arrived at.

In matters relating to the Political Department we suffer a serious disability. That Department works as a kind of *imperium in imperio*, completely isolated from the Government of India, except in regard to occasional vague contacts. The steps that that Department is now taking are themselves significant of the way it functions without any reference to the Government of India, although it is obvious that the Government of India is vitally interested and will be affected by any changes made. All I can do is from time to time to draw your attention to some particular fact relating to the States or the activities of the Political Department.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. To John Colville<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
26th May 1947

Dear Sir John,

I enclose a copy of a telegram<sup>2</sup> I have received from Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla, Prime Minister, C P and Berar.

It seems to me that the objection raised by Mr. Shukla has considerable validity. If the post is in the cadre of C.P. and Berar, there is no justification for taking it out of it before the retrocession is complete. I do not understand why the Resident should interfere in this way and upset the practice that has prevailed thus far. Retrocession will bring certain consequences, but it seems wrong to have the consequences first and then the retrocession. This inversion of the proper order of events may lead to other difficulties. In any event so long as the post is in the C.P. & Berar cadre, no change of the kind suggested should be made.

May I also write to you about a matter to which I have already drawn Lord Mountbatten's attention? This relates to various steps being taken by the Political Department to wind up Residencies and Agencies in the States and to direct the States to correspond directly with various Departments of the Government of India. To take any such step without consultation with the Government of India seems to me highly improper and even unconstitutional. The Residents and Agents undoubtedly represent the Crown Representatives in the States. At the same time they are the channel for the Government of India also to function in the States in regard to many common matters and to that extent they also represent the Government of India. To put an end to a well established machinery without any reference to the Government of India, which is concerned with it, seems to me a very extraordinary procedure. On the merits such a proposal would lead to chaotic conditions in the relationship of the States with the Government of India. Whatever the future set-up might be, it is obvious that there must be a machinery and a proper channel for constant communication between the Government of India and the States, even for the purpose of setting

1 R/3/1/136, I.O.L.R. London Extracts from this letter are printed in *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 10, pp 992-993.

2 On 25 May, Shukla complained of "unwarranted interference" by the Resident of Hyderabad in suggesting that a vacant post of Superintendent in the Hyderabad Railway Police be not filled as usual by the nominee of the C.P. Government because the Hyderabad Railway lands were shortly to be retroceded to the Nizam

up a new relationship. To put an end to existing machinery in a hurry and without consultation can only mean that there is a desire to hinder in every way the development of any new arrangements between the States and the Government of India.

I should like to repeat what I have said previously that we consider these activities of the Political Department objectionable, harmful and discourteous to the Government of India.

I do not know what steps were taken in regard to this matter when I wrote to Lord Mountbatten about it some weeks ago. Owing to the pressure of other events I did not like to remind him of it, but I gather that nothing has been done so far to stop this process of disintegration. I would beg of you to have this matter put up in the Cabinet so that the Government of India might consider it and express its opinion in regard to it.

The Political Department has long been considered as being opposed to Indian progress and unity and it will be unfortunate if anything is done to substantiate this general impression.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 8. To Conrad Corfield<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
26th May 1947

Dear Sir Conrad,

I have written to the Viceroy about a telegram I have received from Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla, Prime Minister of C.P. and Berar. I enclose a copy of this telegram. I do not understand what right the Resident had to interfere with the regular practice on the plea that retrocession will take place later. So long as the post is in the C.P. & Berar cadre, the old practice must necessarily be followed.<sup>2</sup>

1. R/3/1/136, I.O.L.R., London

2. On 30 May Corfield replied: "I understand that it was no more than a suggestion, and that it is still under consideration whether the suggestion should be pursued"

I have written to the Viceroy also on another subject to which I drew Lord Mountbatten's attention some weeks ago. This relates to the steps being taken by the Political Department to close up the Residencies and Agencies in the States and to ask the States to correspond directly with various Departments of the Government of India. I do not know how far these matters have proceeded, but I should like to make it perfectly clear that we think this procedure entirely wrong and unconstitutional and we take the strongest objection to it. Even on the merits it can only mean adding to future burdens both of the States and of the Government of India and producing chaotic conditions. In any event no such step should have been taken without reference to the Government of India which is intimately concerned.

I understand that the Political Department is a charge on the Indian revenues and the various Residencies and Agencies have been carried on at the cost of the Indian tax payer. This fact appears to be forgotten by the Political Department and arrangements are being made without any reference to the Government of India. This would have been bad enough at any time, but in the changed circumstances of today it shows an entire lack of comprehension of what should be done and what should not be done.

I have suggested to the Viceroy that the matter should be brought up before the Cabinet.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru



VISITING THE RIOT-AFFECTED AREAS IN MULTAN, 16 MARCH 1947

COMMUNAL DISTURBANCES  
I. Punjab

## 1. Resolution on Division of the Punjab

*Confidential Draft for Working Committee, 8 March 1947<sup>1</sup>*

During the past seven months India has witnessed many horrors and tragedies which have been enacted in the attempt to gain political ends by brutal violence, murder and coercion. These attempts have failed, as all such attempts must fail, and have only led to greater violence and carnage.

The Punjab, which had thus far escaped this contagion, became six weeks ago the scene of a violent movement, supported by some people in high authority, to coerce and break a popular Ministry which could not be attacked by constitutional methods. A measure of success attended these methods and this has resulted in an uprising among other elements of the population who resented this violent coercion and feared its consequences. There has been an orgy of murder and arson and the police and military have done to death large numbers of people. Several cities of the Punjab have been desolated and Amritsar has been a scene of horror and devastation.

*Resolution passed on 8 March 1947<sup>2</sup>*

During the past seven months India has witnessed many horrors and tragedies which have been enacted in the attempt to gain political ends by brutal violence, murder and coercion. These attempts have failed, as all such attempts must fail, and have only led to greater violence and carnage.

The Punjab, which had thus far escaped this contagion, became six weeks ago the scene of an agitation, supported by some people in high authority, to coerce and break a popular Ministry which could not be attacked by constitutional methods. A measure of success attended this, and an attempt was made to form a ministry dominated by the group that had led the agitation. This was bitterly resented and has resulted in increased and widespread violence. There has been an orgy of murder and arson and Amritsar and Multan have been scenes of horror and devastation.

1 J.N Collection

2 *Congress Bulletin*, 26 March 1947, p 5 The resolution recommending the division of the Punjab was drafted by Nehru

These tragic events have demonstrated that there can be no settlement of the problem by violence and coercion, nor can any temporary arrangement based on coercion last. Therefore it is necessary to find a way out which involves the least amount of compulsion and which enables every substantial community to live the life of its choice. In the Punjab this necessitates a division of the province, so that the predominantly Muslim part may be separated from the predominantly Hindu-Sikh part.

The Working Committee commend this solution, which should work to the advantage of all the communities concerned, and lessen friction and fear and suspicion of each other. The Committee earnestly appeal to the people of the Punjab to put an end to the killing and brutality that are going on, and to face the tragic situation peacefully and with the determination to find a final solution which does not involve compulsion of any major group. The way of violence has been sufficiently tried and has utterly failed to bring any results to any party or group. It has led only to disastrous consequences. It must give place to other methods peacefully employed which avoid the cause of friction by separating the Punjab into two parts.

These tragic events have demonstrated that there can be no settlement of the problem in the Punjab by violence and coercion, and that no arrangement based on coercion can last. Therefore it is necessary to find a way out which involves the least amount of compulsion. This would necessitate a division of the Punjab into two provinces, so that the predominantly Muslim part may be separated from the predominantly non-Muslim part.

The Working Committee commend this solution, which should work to the advantage of all the communities concerned, and lessen friction and fear and suspicion of each other. The Committee earnestly appeal to the people of the Punjab to put an end to the killing and brutality that are going on, and to face the tragic situation, determined to find a solution which does not involve compulsion of any major group and which will effectively remove the cause of friction

2. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
9 March 1947

Dear Lord Wavell,

I have received a letter from Sardar Baldev Singh in regard to recent happenings in the Punjab. We have all been greatly exercised over the Punjab situation as it has developed during the past six weeks.<sup>2</sup> Sardar Baldev Singh, being himself a Punjabi and intimately connected with provincial politics, is naturally even more affected by these developments. He has asked me to convey to you and through you to H.M.G. what the Sikhs feel in this matter. I have suggested to Sardar Baldev Singh to write to you himself.<sup>3</sup>

2. The views that Sardar Baldev Singh has expressed on behalf of the Sikhs are generally shared by the Hindus of the Punjab. There are some Muslims also who are in agreement with them. Although unfortunately this has become a communal issue, it is not essentially so. The recent trouble was started by the demand of the Muslim League to coerce and break up the Coalition Ministry in the province. The first point to which Sardar Baldev Singh wishes to draw special attention, and I wholly agree with him in this matter, is the way certain Members of the Interim Government actively participated in the Punjab agitation and encouraged the attempts to upset the Coalition Government there. This is patently opposed not only to constitutional procedure, but seemed to us wholly lacking in propriety. It put us in a very embarrassing position.

1 *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 9, pp 906-907

2 The Muslim League started an agitation in the Punjab on 24 January, when the Provincial Government imposed a ban on the Muslim League National Guards and the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh. Though the ban was lifted on 28 January, the Muslim League continued its agitation ostensibly against the provisions of the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance, which was in force since November 1946. On 2 March, Premier Khizr Hyat Khan resigned in order "to leave the field clear for the Muslim League to come to such arrangement vis-a-vis the other parties as it might consider best in the interests of the Muslims and the province." On 4 March, a demonstration, consisting of non-Muslim League sections and led by students, was organised in Lahore to protest against the offer made to the Muslim League to form the Government. This demonstration was lathi-charged and fired upon, and lawlessness and communal larceny were widespread in the province.

3. On 11 March, Baldev Singh wrote to Wavell that the Muslim League's attacks on the Coalition Ministry were intended to establish its domination. The Sikhs would not accept this and the only solution was division of the Punjab.

3. The present position is that any attempt to set up a Muslim League ministry in the Punjab in the circumstances will not only give rise to grave apprehensions in the minds of the Sikhs, Hindus and certain others in the Punjab, but also lead to conflict. Indeed it has led to conflict on a severe scale already, and recent events have made the position worse. This apprehension and conflict are obviously due to the fact that the Muslim League openly want to make the whole of the Punjab a Pakistan area and wish to use a League ministry to that end.

4. As I have written to you separately, a proper and fair solution of this difficulty appears to be the division of the Punjab into a predominantly Muslim area and a predominantly non-Muslim area.<sup>4</sup> The Congress has recommended this<sup>5</sup> and I understand that the Sikhs are also agreeable to it and indeed desire it

5. I earnestly hope that no steps will be taken in the Punjab which may add to the apprehensions of the non-Muslim League elements in the province. If any such thing is done it can only lead to trouble.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. See *ante*, section 2, item 17.

5. See the preceding item.

### 3. Wavell's Record of Interview with Nehru<sup>1</sup>

1. We began by talking about the situation in the Punjab, and I asked Nehru whether he had any suggestions to offer. He said that the situation was very dangerous and disturbing; and was principally due to a struggle between two fairly equally balanced parties to be in power over the whole province by June 1948. The province had remained

<sup>1</sup> New Delhi, 10 March 1947. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 9, pp. 907-908

tranquil under an uneasy equilibrium for a long time, but now that that equilibrium was broken, it was going to be difficult to restore it again. There was not much prospect of a coalition government, since the parties mistrusted one another so profoundly; nor could Section 93 continue indefinitely. The only suggestion he had to offer was that there might as a temporary measure be two ministries under the Governor, one for the Eastern part of the province and one for the Western. This would not be intended to prejudge the issue of partition, but might enable the administration of the province to be carried on temporarily. I said that I would have the proposal examined, but I was rather doubtful of its being a practical one. Did he propose that there should be fresh elections or that the existing Assembly should split in two parts according to the districts they came from? He did seem to have thought the matter out very much, but he said that he did not see that an election was necessary, what he proposed was merely a temporary arrangement. I said that I thought the difficulties of such a solution were probably insurmountable, and that certainly a coalition government for the whole province would be very much preferable.

2. We then had some general talk on the political future, particularly with regard to the possible partition of the Punjab and Bengal. Nehru agreed that the Cabinet Mission plan was the best solution if it could be carried through, and that the only real alternative was a partition of the Punjab and Bengal. I said that I did hope the Congress would make a really determined effort to get agreement with the League on the Mission plan, and asked what steps had been taken. Nehru said that he was intending to have an informal talk with Liaquat Ali Khan as soon as possible and that they expect an official reply from the League to the Congress resolution.

Nehru was quite sober and realistic in what he said, but did not seem really hopeful of a settlement with the League.

3. We then got on somehow to the food problem in India; I told Nehru of the pessimistic report of the Rice Controller, Sir Harold Sanderson,<sup>2</sup> who passed through Delhi recently; and he said that the really tragic factor at the moment was the rust disease in the wheat crop in Central India, the crops looked magnificent but were quite useless.

4. We then had some talk on the Inter-Asian Conference,<sup>3</sup> which apparently holds its first meeting on the 22nd. The public meetings are

2. (1890-1966), Director of Rice in the British Ministry of Food, 1941-52.

3. See *post*, section 11 (III).

to be held in the Purana Qila There seemed to be quite a lot of people coming; but I gathered there had already been some trouble, by the Arabs protesting against any Jews coming from Palestine, and China protesting against Tibet being separately represented. I gather that Chatham House, the corresponding American Institute of International Affairs, Australia, and New Zealand, will be represented by observers.

#### 4. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
13th March 1947

Dear Lord Wavell,

As you know, events in the Punjab and in the Frontier Province have been distressing us very greatly. Conditions there do not seem to be improving. Last night I had a telephone conversation with Sardar Baldev Singh who was in Lahore and the account he gave me of what was happening round about Rawalpindi was terrible. Evidently press and other reports do not give all the facts.

In the Frontier Province the agitation led by the Muslim League has now definitely taken a communal turn. The demands of the Muslim League there have been, and are, refund of the fines levied on and realised from the Nandihar tribes in the Hazara area and the return of a Sikh woman who was forcibly converted and, I believe, raped. These demands are very extraordinary. You know the circumstances in which action was taken against the Nandihar tribes and a relatively moderate fine was imposed upon them. This fine was agreed to and has in fact been paid. No further operations were undertaken. To ask for the return of this fine is to put an end to the whole administration of the tribal areas. Also, to ask for the return of the Sikh woman is fantastic and immoral. She was forcibly taken away and she does not want to return. She has been mishandled and ill-treated. The question to consider should be what punishment to inflict on those who treated her in this way. Instead of this a demand is put forward by the Muslim League and supported by agitation for her return to her original captors. No government can agree to such demands, whatever the consequences.

I have avoided the Punjab, as I did not wish to interfere in any way, but I feel now that I must go there. I receive moving appeals from

1 *The Transfer of Power 1942-7, Vol 9, pp 928-929.*

friends in the Punjab and yesterday Sardar Baldev Singh also suggested how very desirable it was for me to go there. I have, therefore, decided to pay a brief visit to the Punjab to meet people there informally and to see things for myself. I intend going there tomorrow (Friday) afternoon by air. I shall go to Lahore first and subsequently I should like to go to Amritsar and Rawalpindi.<sup>2</sup> If possible I might pay a brief visit to Peshawar. I expect to be away for the week-end, returning on Monday.

It is difficult to leave my work and important engagements here at this time, but I feel that everything else should be put aside for the moment and I must give first priority to a visit to the Punjab.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. From 14 to 17 March, Nehru visited Lahore, Rawalpindi, Multan and Amritsar, inspected the riot-affected areas and received many deputations

## **5. Evan Jenkins's Record of Interview with Nehru<sup>1</sup>**

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru spent rather over an hour with me this evening from 7 o'clock

2. We talked first about the immediate situation. He said that since he arrived in Lahore at 4 p.m. he had done nothing but see a large number of people. He felt that the solution to our immediate problem in seriously disturbed areas, such as Rawalpindi, was to hand over to the military commanders. Rightly or wrongly the communities had lost confidence in the services—the non-Muslims suspected Muslim officials and *vice versa*. I explained the difficulties about martial law and said that as I understood the position it could no longer be imposed by proclamation and ordinance. It represented in fact a decision taken by a

1. Lahore, 14 March 1947. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 9, pp. 952-953.

military commander on his own responsibility, usually because the civil administration had completely ceased to function, or his operations or troops were endangered. The military commander acted in the exercise of a recognised power under the common law; he had no statutory backing and was answerable afterwards for his actions. Pt J.L. Nehru said that he was not well in the legal technicalities, but the "short point" was that the people should feel that really firm measures were being taken to suppress the agitation. I replied that in my opinion certain offences, such as attempted murder, kidnapping and its variants, robbery and dacoity and their variants, rape and arson, should be made punishable with death. The principle of "minimum force" should also be abrogated. I said that I had made these proposals to the Viceroy in a letter I was despatching today. Pt. J.L. Nehru seemed to agree with these measures, and said that if we were to stop trouble in the central and eastern Punjab, the north and west must be pacified within a few days. In Bihar firm action by the army had had an electric effect. I replied that troops were operating in large numbers in the disturbed areas and had been told to interpret the principle of "minimum force" in a sensible way. Pt. J.L Nehru asked if it was possible to extend the restrictions on gatherings, the carrying of weapons, etc., to the rural areas. I replied that it was possible and that action had been taken to my knowledge in Rawalpindi and Multan. I was less sure about Attock

3. We then passed to a discussion of the long-term problem Pt. J.L. Nehru said that some sort of partition was inevitable, but it must be made within the framework of the present constitution and by methods which could be established by convention and not by legislation. He thought a Muslim Area, a Central Area and a Non-Muslim Area should be recognised, and that Ministers should be so appointed that each area was for certain purposes autonomous. The Ministers of all three Areas should sit jointly for other purposes—that is to say for matters of common concern. I said that the same idea had occurred to me, viz. that we should avoid a physical partition, but adopt devices which would give confidence to all communities. The arrangement would be a cumbersome one and might lead to trouble in the Departments. For example, there would have to be at least two and possibly three separate sections of the Education Department, each working under its own Minister. I referred to the arrangements for Scotland, and Pt. J L Nehru took this point up and said that the analogy was not at all a bad one. Bills affecting Scotland had to be passed in Parliament, but were first referred to a Grand Committee consisting of the Scottish Members, whose advice was by convention accepted .

4. Pandit J L. Nehru ended our conversation by saying that if I was here on Sunday evening, he would like to see me again. I said that I would be very glad to see him.

5. During our conversation he put through a telephone call to Dr. Khan Sahib at Peshawar and subsequently transmitted a message by G.S. to the Viceroy in reply to a message from the Viceroy<sup>2</sup> which I handed to him.

2 Nehru agreed "though protestingly" to a request from Wavell not to go to Peshawar

## 6. Advice to Refugees<sup>1</sup>

I have heard of your woeful tale and am conscious that you have suffered a lot. But four things are essential. First, people should not get panicky; secondly, those still in danger should be protected; thirdly, those who have been evacuated from the danger zones should be properly looked after; and, fourthly, further trouble must be stopped and stopped speedily.

I am confident that the military authorities will be able to bring the situation rapidly under control. The Government are determined to do everything possible to meet the situation. The people should face all difficulties with courage I have always loved the people of the Punjab and admired them as a brave people I feel sure that the Punjab and the whole of India will progress as they are already on the threshold of freedom. The present difficulties are in the nature of a test which, I have no doubt, will be successfully met.

<sup>1</sup> Speech at a refugee camp, Lahore, 15 March 1947 From *National Herald*, 16 March 1947

## 7. Evan Jenkins's Record of Interview with Nehru<sup>1</sup>

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru spent an hour with me this evening from 7 p.m. He had a number of suggestions about my proposed amendments in the criminal law. For convenience I have set out these suggestions and certain suggestions of an executive nature in the statement appended.<sup>2</sup>

Pandit Nehru doubted whether the present administration could act firmly under the proposed legislation and I reassured him on this point

2. After our discussion of the detailed points, Pt Nehru spoke to me at some length about the future of India. He felt that British officers—perhaps naturally—were inclined to be hostile to the aspirations of Indian nationalists and were in some degree working against the union of India. I replied that in the Punjab we had always identified ourselves with our province and had been on excellent terms with our Ministers. Punjabis were individualists, but British officers in the Punjab were on the whole in favour of a united Punjab and were not in favour of Pakistan. I said that in my view unionism was still the right answer. The Central Government might have observed a certain unwillingness in the Punjab to accept their ideas, e.g. on the new all-India services. This was partly due to the delicate position of the former Premier,<sup>3</sup> who, while he did not believe in Pakistan, was naturally not anxious to identify himself too closely with a strong Centre. Our discussion was rather academic, but quite cordial.

17-3-1947

3. In recording this note yesterday I omitted to mention that Pt. Nehru said he had talked to Master Tara Singh, and felt that a "notional" partition might work—he had given me his views on it during our earlier talk here. I replied that any arrangement that would serve as a "bridge" would be worth trying. I added that it was essential to try to get a popular ministry into office within a reasonable time.

1. Lahore, 16 March 1947. R/3/1/176, I O L R , London.

2 See the enclosure.

3 Till his resignation on 2 March 1947, Khizr Hyat Khan Tiwana of the Unionist Party was heading the coalition ministry, which commanded the support of 95 members in a house of 174. While the Unionist Party had 11 members, the other important constituents were Congress (50) and Akalis (23).

## ENCLOSURE

**A. Legal points**

The following might be included in any legislation:—

- (1) Forcible conversion to be punishable with death. (What section of the I.P.C. covers this?)
- (2) Destruction of religious places and religious books to be similarly punishable. (Same query. Destruction by fire is already covered.)
- (3) Conspiracy should be covered
- (4) Stabbing might be dealt with by a special system of collective fines, e.g. if Muslims stabbed in a village, Hindus pay, and *vice versa*.
- (5) Military should be given powers to search and arrest. (I have already referred to L.R.)
- (6) Trials to be summary. (Ordinance provides for this, and I have asked L.R. to see whether provisions are suitable)
- (7) Ordinance to be given retrospective effect (I said I thought this was impossible on legal grounds though I agreed whole-heartedly in principle)

**B. Executive matters**

(1) Special search to be made for Sikh women alleged to have been seized by Muslims Master Tara Singh attaches supreme importance to this Orders should be issued at once to the districts concerned to go into this matter and make searches where necessary.

(2) Zaildars<sup>4</sup> and village officials who have taken part in disturbances, or have not helped, to be suspended, and this to be announced publicly.

(3) New legislation to be widely published. (I agree )  
 (4) Special arrangements to be made for investigation (This is already in hand.)

Necessary action should be taken immediately where indicated.

4. *Zaildar*—a superintendent of several villages.

**8. Politics and Communalism in the Punjab<sup>1</sup>**

The situation in the Punjab is more or less under control. I propose to

1. Statement at a press conference in Lahore on 17 March 1947 on the conclusion of his tour of the Punjab From *The Hindustan Times* and *Tribune* of 18 March 1947.

say little about my Punjab visit at this time. I have seen ghastly sights and I have heard of behaviour by human beings which would degrade even the brute. The first thing to be done is to put an end to every kind of disorderly action. The second thing is to protect and rescue the people who may be threatened or are in danger, more specially the women, who have been abducted or removed by force, must be brought back to their own homes. Then other problems like the care of refugees and rehabilitation have to be tackled.

I think that the present disturbances will be completely ended within a very few days. So far as I have been able to see, the military are acting efficiently and with rapidity.

There is never any need for panic for whatever has happened, much less today when the situation is more or less under control. The man who is panicky is a useless citizen and a danger to others.

Obviously all that has happened is intimately connected with political affairs. I prefer to say nothing about that aspect except this: if political affairs are to be conducted in this way then they cease to be political affairs and become some kind of a jungle warfare which reduces human habitation to the state of a desert. If there is any grain of intelligence in a person, he must realize that whatever the political objective he may aim at, this is not the way to attain it. Any such attempt must bring, as it has in a measure brought, ruin and destruction in its train. Let people struggle for their political aim if they want to. But they can do so as human beings with a measure of human dignity.

I am not enamoured of slogans anywhere. The Punjab is specially fond of slogans. There may be times when slogans are useful and good but when we are up against these hard facts which we face today, these slogans cease to have any meaning. In particular slogans cursing and denouncing others are peculiarly unbecoming and objectionable. Slogans with *murdabad* attached to them are not brave slogans but indicate the mentality of a coward or a bully.

India will go along this path to her destined end of independence and nothing that has happened is going to stop this. So, I am sure, will the Punjab as a part of India, in spite of everything that has happened, or is likely to happen. Mighty historic forces are at work driving us all in that direction in spite of our own follies. It is up to us, however, to march ahead with dignity and with head erect or crawl like animals in the field.

The Punjab has had a hard lesson. Let it learn from it and not lose itself in a sea of hatred and reprisals which can only lead to mutual destruction and infamy. Let us all build together and prepare ourselves for the great things to come.

A relief fund has been started and an appeal has been issued for it. I hope that this fund will be liberally subscribed to and that it is to be employed to give help to a large number of sufferers of these disturbances regardless of creed or any other distinction.

## 9. To Evan Jenkins<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
4 April 1947

Dear Sir Evan,

I received a large deputation from Rawalpindi and Mianwali this morning who gave me a long report about their difficulties<sup>2</sup>. I asked them to write it down as briefly as possible and they have now given me the enclosed note. I have no personal knowledge of these happenings since I visited Rawalpindi, and I am, therefore, taking the liberty of forwarding the note to you. It may be a one-sided note and exaggerated in parts. That you will be in a better position to judge.

2. There is one point, however, to which I should like to draw your special attention as I did when I met you last. This is the question of rescuing women who have been abducted or forcibly converted. You will realise that nothing adds to popular passion more than stories of abductions of women, and so long as these abducted women are not rescued trouble will simmer and might possibly blaze out. Every day's delay in rescuing them adds to the difficulties of the situation and makes rescue more unlikely. In view of the open allegations of partiality against the police, it was suggested that the military might help in this rescue work. It appears from the report I am sending you that about 200 such women were in fact recovered as also a large quantity of

1. R/3/1/176, I O L R , London

2 The report had blamed the civil authorities for interfering with the work of the military and preventing them from performing their legitimate duties. It demanded, among other things, that the military should be empowered to try and sentence summarily all offenders, and that the rescue work by the military should be expedited. It also demanded removal of some Muslim officials from Rawalpindi because of their communal attitude and the reinforcement of the police force in Rawalpindi with large numbers belonging to the minority communities

looted property. I am told that the military has been stopped from doing this work now, although about 100 women have still to be rescued. I would request you to take special interest in this matter so that the rescue of these women as well as those who have suffered compulsory conversion might be effected as soon as possible. It is unfortunate that many people place no reliance on the police in such matters.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**10. To Bhimsen Sachar<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
14 April 1947

My dear Bhimsenji,<sup>2</sup>

I have received reports from creditable sources that the relief fund that you have started in the Punjab is used for Hindus and Sikhs only and Muslims are specifically excluded. Indeed I was told that the sponsors of the relief fund objected to state in public that the fund was for all. This news has rather upset me and Gandhiji was also put out by it. I am quite clear in my mind that in any kind of relief work no Congressman can discriminate as between different communities. Relief work is humanitarian work and it loses all its virtue if even humanitarianism assumes a communal garb. It may be, of course, that most of the cases demanding relief are Hindu or Sikh. But our declared object must be to give relief wherever it is needed regardless of community, religion or creed. In the past I have refused to associate myself with any sectarian organisation or relief fund and I do not wish to do so now.

I hope the news I received was not correct. In any event an open declaration should be made.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2 (1893-1978); imprisoned several times during the freedom movement; member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly, 1936-47; Finance Minister in the Coalition Government in Punjab, 1946-47; deputy leader of the Congress Party in the Pakistan Constituent Assembly; moved to India in September 1947; Chief Minister of Punjab, 1949 and 1952-56; Governor of Orissa, 1956-57, and Andhra Pradesh, 1959-62; High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, 1964-66.

## 11. Mountbatten's Record of Interview with Nehru<sup>1</sup>

I saw Pandit Nehru for a few moments during the Commander-in-Chief's evening party on Saturday, 26th April. I told him that I had instructed the Governor of the Punjab not to allow the Nawab of Mamdot<sup>2</sup> to form a ministry, even though he had 93 members out of 175 in the Legislative Assembly I told him that I had sent for Mr. Jinnah that day and explained my reasons, which were:

- (a) that the Sikhs would, in my opinion, fight or at all events riot if a predominantly one community government were installed,
- (b) that since a decision would be made within the month, which would probably involve the partition of the Punjab, it seemed futile to put in a ministry for such a short period.

Pandit Nehru said that the decision was for me to make, but he quite saw my reasons and thought I was probably right.

I then told him that Mr. Jinnah originally asked me not to see Mamdot, but had rung just before dinner to say that he now wanted me to see Mamdot when I was at Rawalpindi.

I also told Pandit Nehru that I did not propose to hold any more meetings on the subject of the plan for the transfer of power prior to Lord Ismay going home on the 2nd May, since I should be away at the Frontier until Wednesday and members would be busy with the Constituent Assembly.

I asked him if he would like Sir Eric Mieville to bring round the written outline of the plan early next week. When he said he would like this, I called Sir Eric over and left him to make an appointment with Pandit Nehru.<sup>3</sup>

1 New Delhi, 26 April 1947 Lord Mountbatten Papers, Broadlands Archives Trust, Broadlands, Romsey, Hampshire.

2 Khan Iftikhar Hussain of Mamdot was the leader of the Muslim League in the Punjab Assembly

3. See *ante*, section 3, item 15.

**12. To Rameshwari Nehru<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
13th May 1947

My dear Shrimati Rameshwari Nehru,

Thank you for your letter of the 2nd May. I had an account of what happened in Pindi and elsewhere from Chamanlal Lady Mountbatten also spoke to me about it. I am afraid we shall have to face these difficulties during the coming months of change. Everybody's nerves seem to be on edge and the old officials cannot get out of their old habits

Thank you very much for all the trouble you took in going to Pindi.

Yours,  
J. Nehru

1 File No 10(8)-PS/47-PMS

**13. To John Colville<sup>1</sup>**

Mussoorie  
23 May 1947

Dear Sir John,

During my very short stay here I have been increasingly distressed by news from the Punjab, especially Lahore. Parts of the old walled city of Lahore are being gradually reduced to ashes and there appears to be a complete lack of control of the situation. Reports of those killed by police firing or wounded or arrested and searches made in houses indicate an extreme partiality on the part of the police. It is extraordinary how the administration, in so far as Lahore is concerned, is hardly functioning as it should. I realise fully the difficulties and the strain caused by these occurrences. At the same time it seems to me obvious that if this kind of thing continues, it will spread with great rapidity in other parts of the Punjab also. If the situation in Lahore cannot be controlled, it is still less likely that a wider conflagration will be controlled. The present police authorities are apparently totally unable to control it and reports reach me from impartial sources that no very serious attempt has been made to meet the situation. Whether these reports are correct or not, I cannot say. But the fact that such a serious situation could continue for days and weeks is bad enough. I would earnestly request you to consider what other and further steps should be taken

1 *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 10, pp 968-969

in this matter. The only other step that suggests itself is the effective use of the army in the city of Lahore with freedom to act as they think proper to deal with the situation<sup>2</sup>

2 I realise that during your brief tenure of the Viceroyalty you will hesitate to take any new step. Perhaps Lord Mountbatten might be consulted by cable or otherwise.

3. Reports from Calcutta are also disturbing Many of these reports are often exaggerated and alarmist Nevertheless it is safer to take every precaution for a possible contingency. I have received a letter from a Muslim friend, whom I consider impartial and balanced, from Calcutta.<sup>3</sup> I enclose a copy of this letter for your information.

4. I hope to return to Delhi on Monday morning<sup>4</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2 Colville replied on 26 May that the 4th Division was already well on its way to the Punjab and that no additional troops could be sent. If the very wide powers given to the military by the Punjab Disturbed Areas (Special Powers of the Armed Forces) Ordinance, 1947 were properly used they should be adequate for any purpose which the authorities might require He did not think that martial law was necessary

3 In his letter dated 21 May 1947, Obaidur Rahman informed Nehru that "an intensive whispering campaign has been started here, that an all-out 'Battle for Calcutta' will begin immediately after the June 2 conference", and that it would be the "bloodiest battle in India's history with no holds barred, not even bacteriological warfare" So it was suggested that the army should stand by ready to take complete control of the city at a moment's notice

4 Nehru returned to Delhi on 26 May after a visit of six days to Mussoorie.

#### 14. To Kanta Dogra<sup>1</sup>

Mussoorie  
May 24, 1947

My dear Kanta,<sup>2</sup>

You wrote to me a long time ago and I have not sent you any answer.

1 J.N Collection

2. A citizen of Lahore; married to R. N. Dogra, first director of the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi

It is difficult to write when one is continually being faced by all manner of problems Personal letters are set aside for leisure which never comes.

Recent and present happenings in Lahore have worsened the problem to which you refer.<sup>3</sup> We are passing through a bad period. But however bad it might be we have to face it and overcome our difficulties. I have no doubt in my mind that we shall overcome them. But the immediate future is going to be heavy for all of us.

It is during these periods of difficulty that we should keep alight the fire of idealism in our minds and hearts. Not an airy idealism unconnected with life's problems, but something which gives us anchorage and helps us to understand those problems in proper perspective

You write in your letter that you intended coming to Delhi. I do not know whether you did come then. If you come there, you should certainly come to see me.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

3 In her letter of 26 March 1947, Kanta Dogra had expressed her deep distress over the communal riots in Lahore and had sought "a word of sympathy and courage" from Nehru to help them get back their courage and faith

## 15. Evan Jenkins's Record of Interview with Nehru<sup>1</sup>

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru saw me at his request at 11 a.m. We talked for about one hour and 20 minutes.

2. Most of our talk was concerned with the general political situation. The most important points raised on the immediate situation in the Punjab were the following:—

(1) I said that my main worry at the moment was that we had been defeated by the incendiaries. We had had to develop new tactics against them and this had taken time. Broadly, we were working on a kind of

1. 30 May 1947. R/3/1/176, I.O.L.R., London. The last paragraph has been reproduced from Jenkins's fortnightly report to Mountbatten dated 31 May 1947. R/3/1/150, I.O.L.R., London

A.R.P. system, and the problems were much the same as those which had arisen during the fire blitz in London. Empty houses in particular were a great danger. I explained that most of the houses burnt after the first two days or so had been fired in the upper storeys, and that we believed that in some cases incendiary compounds with a delayed action had been used.

(2) The Pandit Sahib said he supposed I had had many complaints against the police. He had heard mainly the Hindu-Sikh version of these complaints, which might be one-sided. I replied that on the whole I thought the police had done very well. I believed that during the first two days greater energy might have been shown by certain elements in the Force, and there probably had been instances later of partiality or indiscipline; but we must not forget (a) that the men were working in very trying conditions and that some of them had had to do as much as 14 days without relief, and (b) that the communal attacks on the police were part of the general communal plan. The regular police had acquired a kind of immunity to criticism and stood up to attacks of all kinds much better than the other services. The Pandit Sahib asked if we were making adequate use of troops I said we were using all the troops we could—the forces at our disposal had not been unlimited. He remarked that rightly or wrongly troops inspired more confidence than the police. I said that this might be so, but that I doubted if the army had the immunity to which I had referred, and it would be very easy for the politicians to worsen army morale.

(3) The Pandit Sahib suggested that in very seriously disturbed areas we might, without a declaration of martial law, give more powers to the troops. We discussed the nature of martial law and he made it clear that he did not mean that the military commander should supersede the civil authorities. He was thinking more of powers of dispersal and search. I said that the troops possessed these powers, but that G.H.Q. were always a little nervous about their use. In Rawalpindi General Lovett<sup>2</sup> had taken a robust commonsense view and General Messervy<sup>3</sup> was also of opinion that the powers already available were adequate, provided it was clearly understood that all officers would be backed up in any *bona fide* action. We had some general discussion on the doctrine of "minimum force" and agreed that the authorities already had

2 Major-General Osmond de Turville Lovett (1898-1982), 2nd Lieutenant, Indian Army, 1917; temporary Major-General, 1945, retired 1948

3. General Sir Frank Walter Messervy (1893-1974), commanded 7th Indian Division in Arakan and at Kohima, 1944, G O C-in-C, Northern Command, India, 1946-47, Commander-in-Chief, Pakistan Army, 1947, retired 1948.

power to use any force necessary to deal with the situation actually confronting them. If conditions were such, as they admittedly are now, that the immediate dispersal of a crowd was necessary, then the minimum force would be the force required for its immediate dispersal

(4) I mentioned the disturbances in Gurgaon, and the Pandit Sahib said that he had heard very odd stories about Mr. Brendon,<sup>4</sup> who had talked about "keeping the score" between the communities, had made some very arbitrary arrests, and was generally inaccessible. I said that Mr Brendon was a good and energetic executive officer, but inclined to be critical of Government and not very communicative in his reports. I knew he was disliked last summer by a number of landowners and businessmen, but I had been assured by one of the local Communists that Mr. Brendon's object had always been to befriend the poor men. As to the arrests, I knew that some prominent people had been arrested, but the Gurgaon situation was serious.

(5) The Pandit Sahib said that it had been suggested to him that our worst disturbed districts were those in charge of British officers and that British officers had ceased to care whether disturbances occurred or not I said that in accordance with old tradition we posted British officers as neutrals to our most difficult districts They were all working very hard, and I did not think that this criticism of them was fair. In fact there had been quite serious disturbances in districts like Rohtak and Ludhiana, where the staffs were completely Indian. We talked of intelligence, and the complete absence of advance information about the Rawalpindi disturbances The Pandit Sahib said the official intelligence systems were bad I disagreed and pointed out that no one (even the local minority leaders) had any information of the Rawalpindi trouble.

3. On matters in the more general field, the main points taken were these:—

(i) I said that the Punjab situation was highly explosive. I thought that the Muslims probably and the Sikhs possibly would reject H.M.G.'s new plan.<sup>5</sup> We could not tell where trouble would begin, but it might be widespread and there might be much violence.

(ii) The Pandit Sahib said that he thought there was some chance of Jinnah accepting the plan if he could get nothing better. He had told the Viceroy that he would advise his followers to accept it, though

<sup>4</sup> Patrick Brendon (b 1913), joined the Indian Civil Service in 1937 and served in the Punjab, rose to rank of Commissioner in December 1943

<sup>5</sup> See *ante*, section 3, item 38

he would give no statement in writing to this effect I said that my recent talk with Liaquat Ali Khan was not reassuring. His line seemed to be that the Muslim League would not accept partition, and that it would be for the British Government to enforce it.

(iii) The Pandit Sahib spoke at some length and with considerable sense about the position of H.M G. He said he felt that what was needed was a plan by the Indian leaders themselves. Psychologically it would be very difficult for H M G to enforce any decision; the choice lay between enforcement and a purely Indian adjustment, which might involve fighting. The most difficult course was the middle course which H M.G. were now pursuing I said that I too saw great difficulty in a plan which rested on the cooperation of parties which disliked it. The Pandit Sahib said that the Congress still wanted the Statement of 16th May 1946, but would accept the plan as a modification of it—provided always that all parties were prepared to accept the plan as a settlement and would work it. He could see little point in proceeding with a plan unless it was going to be worked.

(iv) We then talked about interim arrangements. The Pandit Sahib said he thought that some zonal system of Government should be introduced between the adoption of the plan, if it is adopted, and actual partition I said that my intention was to send for the local leaders—probably Mamdot, Sachar and Tara Singh and possibly Swaran Singh, when the plan was published and press them to form either an ordinary coalition government or what might be described as a zonal coalition subject to conventions. Personally I felt that zonal arrangements would require more forbearance and more cooperation than an ordinary coalition, but I would do my best.

(v) We reverted at the end to some general conversation. I said I thought the Sikhs would quite likely reject the plan, and the Pandit Sahib replied that there was no reason why they should do so, since the Boundary Commission would have very wide terms of reference I said the Punjabis were quite capable of rioting because something might happen, and the passage in the plan dealing with the terms of reference simply postponed an awkward decision

4 The Pandit Sahib was very affable throughout. He seemed to me a little worried, but I can hardly blame him. I had a very amicable conversation with Nehru, who was not inclined to sponsor local complaints He took a gloomy view about the prospects of a settlement and said that the plan would be acceptable to Congress only if it were in fact treated as a settlement He thought that there was no sound middle course between the enforcement of an award (which seemed to him impracticable) and the abandonment of India A plan which

H.M.G. did not intend to enforce and which the parties would not accept would be of little value. In the long run the Indians must settle their disputes themselves, and if they could not do so now, they must do so after the British left. He believed that there might be "civil war" in the Punjab, but he did not think it would last for long.

## COMMUNAL DISTURBANCES

II. N. W. F. P.

## 1. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

I have received your message.<sup>2</sup> The Prime Minister of the Frontier Province especially desired my visit and still thinks that I should go there. My visit was going to be very brief and private and I do not understand why it should be objected to. Still in deference to your wishes I have decided not to go to Peshawar on this occasion.

J. Nehru

1 14 March 1947. File No 10(8)-PS/47-PMS

2 Wavell had asked Nehru not to go to Peshawar where the situation "is very tense and there is evidently a grave risk that your visit, however careful your action and speeches may be, will lead to serious disturbances"

## 2. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
19 March 1947

Dear Lord Wavell,

When I was in Lahore I received your message asking me not to proceed to Peshawar as I had intended to do.<sup>2</sup> In deference to your wishes I cancelled my visit to Peshawar. I must say, however, that I was hurt by this development. It was not merely the personal aspect, though that cannot be ignored, but even more so the public aspect of the question. Am I to be prevented from performing my duty and shouldering the responsibility which has been cast upon me, because someone does not like me or does not approve of my going to the Frontier?

1 *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. 9, pp 988-989

2 In his reply dated 19 March, Wavell explained that he had asked Nehru on his own initiative to cancel the visit since he was apprehensive of Nehru's safety and wished not to divert the police from their other duties at a critical time

2. That someone presumably is Sir Olaf Caroe, the Governor.<sup>3</sup> It is patent that he disapproves of my being in charge of the External Affairs Department. Long before I took charge of this, he tried to prevent my doing so by approaching you on the subject. Subsequently on the eve of my visit to the Frontier, he tried to prevent my going there. The incidents that happened during my visit may have been subsequently advanced as proof of the undesirability of my visit.<sup>4</sup> They led me to a contrary conclusion and made me realise how inefficient and out-of-date the Frontier administration was. This administration had created a legend about itself and about conditions in the Frontier, and it did not like anyone to interfere with this set-up. My experience during the past six months has convinced me that no substantial good can be done to the Frontier areas unless this set-up is changed.

3. I did not wish to raise this question till other and more vital matters had been settled. More especially I did not want to raise it at this stage on the eve of your departure from India. But this new development, which led to Sir Olaf Caroe objecting again to my visiting the Frontier, has compelled me to write. I must ask your forgiveness for this. I cannot continue to shoulder my present responsibilities if I am prevented from doing my work in this way. It is an extraordinary position. Almost anyone can go to Peshawar, but I must not do so, even for a brief and informal visit

4. I had intended going to Peshawar chiefly because Dr. Khan Sahib, the Prime Minister, wanted me to go there and see him. Immediately after receiving your message, I telephoned to him and he again said that he wanted me to come. He further informed me that the Governor thought differently and that he had an argument with him that day on the subject.

5. From this and many other instances it is clear that there is no cooperation between the Prime Minister and the Governor. Indeed there is distrust and lack of confidence in each other, and the Frontier Ministry think that the Governor's weight is usually cast on the side opposed

3 In the same letter Wavell wrote: "Sir Olaf Caroe did not object to your visit to Peshawar. When I informed him of your intention he replied that it was dangerous, that troops and police were too fully occupied to allow of special measures for protection, but that 'we will do our best'. As I had heard also unofficially that there was some apprehension among the military authorities about your visit, I asked you on my own initiative to cancel the visit since I was apprehensive of your safety.. "

4 See *Selected Works* (Second Series), Vol 1, pp 319-329 and 343-345.

to them. This is a position which can only lead to trouble, as indeed it has already done.

6. I think the time has come when this matter must be faced squarely and a solution found. That solution should be the retirement of the Governor. Sir Olaf Caroe should, therefore, be requested to retire from his present office at an early date.

7. I do not expect any action from you in the matter on the eve of your departure. Nevertheless this is an urgent question and I cannot silently submit to it. I thought it fair, to you and the Governor, as well as to myself, to point out the urgency of a change in the Governorship.

8 If you so wish, a copy of this letter can be sent to Sir Olaf Caroe.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### **3. To Olaf Caroe<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
26th March 1947

Dear Sir Olaf,

Thank you for your letter of the 20th March. I did not go to the Frontier because Lord Wavell asked me not to go just then. I confess I was unhappy about this, and it seemed to me rather odd that I should be asked not to go even on a private and brief visit. I have not believed in the policy of shirking a problem or avoiding risk. I went to the Punjab and I think my visit did good.

Dr. Khan Sahib has been here and we have had a number of talks. It is evident that the policy he intends to pursue is not in keeping with your policy. There is an inherent conflict between the two. Indeed I understand that you told him to resign and further said that he and his colleagues had made a mistake in aligning themselves with the Congress. This creates an impossible position at any time and more especially when the province has to face a difficult situation. Most of the officers in the N.W.F.P. will naturally follow your lead and this conflict between you and the Ministry will lead to a weakening and detrac-

rioration of the administration. We cannot afford to have this at this particular juncture.

My visit to the Frontier last year revealed to me this inherent conflict and I wrote to you at some length about it.<sup>2</sup> Subsequent events have strengthened that conviction. The Governor and his chief officers seem to function more as allies of the opposition than of the Ministry. The reaction of this policy in the Tribal Areas has also been marked. The way the Pir of Manki<sup>3</sup> has been allowed to have a free hand in preaching murder under the sheltering care of local officers is not the kind of thing one expects from an efficient and cooperative administration.

I have received numerous complaints about the rationing system in the Tribal Areas. These complaints resolve themselves in allegations of partiality and unfairness on the part of some of the officers concerned. In this respect also the Pir of Manki appears to be a favoured person. These are allegations which I cannot verify and have no means of verifying.

I have become convinced that the present set-up in the Frontier is unsatisfactory and is leading to trouble. In view of the rapid transition that is going to take place in India, it has become necessary to adapt ourselves immediately to these new conditions.

Some days before Lord Wavell's departure I wrote to him on this subject.<sup>4</sup> I did not want to trouble him on the eve of his departure, but I felt the urgency of the situation and was compelled by these circumstances to write to him. I pointed out to him that there was a complete absence of a common outlook between you and me, as well as between you and the Frontier Ministry. In view of this, the only proper course appeared to be your resignation from the Governorship. I do not know if he communicated the contents of this letter to you.

I hope you will forgive me for the frankness with which I am writing to you. The issues before us are too serious for any trifling on our part. I have written more or less briefly and there is much else that I would have liked to put before you. But for the moment this must suffice.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2 See *Selected Works* (Second Series), Vol 1, pp 337-342.

3. The Pir of Manki was deputed by the Muslim League to the tribal territory, just before Nehru's arrival, to intensify propaganda among the tribes. Caroe considered that if the Pir and other agents of the League visiting tribal territories had been arrested, disturbances would have followed.

4 See the preceding item.

**4. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
4 April 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

I learnt from Mr. Gandhi that you have been discussing with him and with Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan affairs in the Frontier. As I have some official connection with the administration of the Tribal Areas and am otherwise also greatly interested in the problems of the Frontier, I should like to discuss these matters with you when you have a little more leisure than you have now. Meanwhile I am sending you copies of two letters. One of these, dated 19th March, was addressed to Lord Wavell;<sup>2</sup> the other, dated 26th March,<sup>3</sup> was sent to Sir Olaf Caroe, the Governor of the N.W.F.P. Both of these letters have been kept secret by me and not put on any official file.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N Collection

2 See *ante*, item 2

3. See the preceding item

**5. Minutes of the Fourth Miscellaneous Meeting of the Viceroy<sup>1</sup>**

The Viceroy opened the meeting by thanking Pandit Nehru for the letter<sup>2</sup> which he had sent him that morning. He went on to say that he had hoped to be able at the present time to give all his attention to efforts to find a solution for the future of India as a whole and to avoid details which only concerned individual provinces. However, he felt that the situation in the N.W.F.P was, if not dealt with now, likely to prejudice the wider problem. His immediate object, therefore, was to find a temporary expedient which would restore that situation and maintain peace until an over-all solution for the whole of India

1 New Delhi, 18 April 1947 Extracts *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 10, pp 315-319. The meeting was attended by Mountbatten, Nehru, Olaf Caroe, Khan Sahib, Ismay and Eric Mieville

2 See *ante*, section 3, item 12

had been decided. He hoped that that solution, when found, would be acceptable to all parties, and would result in the prevention of bloodshed. From the latest reports it appeared that the situation at the Frontier was deteriorating both in those areas which were the direct responsibility of Dr. Khan Sahib and in the tribal areas.<sup>3</sup> As a specific point he (Olaf Caroe) had disagreed with Dr. Khan Sahib over the question of interference—though from the highest motives—by the Executive in the discretion of magistrates, particularly in their judicial functions.

Pandit Nehru said that he fully upheld the principle that there should be no such interference. Dr. Khan Sahib said that it was Sir Olaf Caroe who interfered with him. The Viceroy said that he would be quite ready to send an independent judge to look into this question if both Sir Olaf Caroe and Dr. Khan Sahib wished it.

The Viceroy asked Pandit Nehru whether he agreed that a popular Government should never have to be held in power by the use of troops if this was in any way avoidable Pandit Nehru agreed thoroughly.

Pandit Nehru asked Dr. Khan Sahib whether he was complaining against being restricted. Dr. Khan Sahib said that he was . .

Dr. Khan Sahib agreed thoroughly with this line of action<sup>4</sup>. He added that he did not think that any condition should be made in the release of political prisoners Pandit Nehru also agreed that such a statement should be issued, and made suggestions as to the wording of it. Sir Olaf Caroe agreed that a statement on the lines suggested by the Viceroy would be helpful.

The Viceroy asked whether it was considered that it was very important not to arm the rival factions in the N.W.F.P. Dr. Khan Sahib and Pandit Nehru agreed that it was.

Sir Olaf Caroe said that it was Dr. Khan Sahib's policy to let everybody who was likely to vote for him have a gun. Dr. Khan Sahib said that this was not the case. He had been issuing permits for fire-arms recently, but solely for record purposes. Nevertheless, he felt that villagers must have something to protect themselves with. The trouble was that the good villagers had no arms and the "undesirables" had arms

3. Rioting, looting and arson occurred at Dera Ismail Khan in the Hazara district and the Assistant Commissioner's cars were stoned.
4. Mountbatten had proposed that Caroe should announce that elections would be held in the Province, and suggested that in order to establish a truce the Muslim League should call off the direct action campaign and the Government should issue a statement saying all political offenders would be released on the condition that they did not take advantage of the truce.

without licences. Pandit Nehru pointed out that there were and always had been a large number of guns on the Frontier.

Pandit Nehru said that the rough dividing line between Congress and Muslim League supporters in the N.W F P. was on class lines Sir Olaf Caroe did not agree with this. He thought that the present division was largely a reproduction on the political stage of old factions.

The Viceroy said that Dr. Khan Sahib had been accused of holding up press telegrams and Sir Olaf Caroe said that there had been some unwise censorship by the Government. Dr. Khan Sahib said that there had been only one case of censorship He said that he would repeat the orders that had been issued that there should be none.

Dr. Khan Sahib said that he would be very pleased if the Viceroy would come; he felt sure that such a visit would be most helpful. Sir Olaf Caroe and Pandit Nehru agreed with this.

## 6. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
26th April, 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

I am writing to you with some hesitation as I have nothing really new to put before you But I am worried about the state of affairs round about D.I. Khan as well as the continuation of the aggressive activities of the Muslim League in the Frontier <sup>2</sup>

I had hoped that after the Gandhi-Jinnah appeal<sup>3</sup> there would be a withdrawal of these movements That might not have resulted in com-

### 1. J.N Collection

- 2 A procession taken out by the Muslim League in Dera Ismail Khan turned violent on 15 April 1947, causing extensive loss of life and property Subsequently the trouble engulfed the entire district of D I Khan, thousands of Hindus and Sikhs being rendered homeless
3. Under the Viceroy's aegis an appeal over the signatures of Jinnah and Mahatma Gandhi for communal peace was issued on 15 April 1947 which deplored acts of lawlessness and violence, denounced the use of force to achieve political ends and called upon all the communities of India, to whatever persuasions they might belong, not only to refrain from all acts of violence and disorder, but also to avoid, both in speech and writing, any incitement to such acts Though this appeal was widely circulated in League's 'Direct Action' areas, its purpose was entirely defeated in practice.

plete cessation of all aggressive activities but it would have had a powerful effect. There has been no such indication of stopping the movement and indeed there is an attempt to intensify it in the hope of forcing Government to take some action, which it otherwise might not do. That action, it is clearly stated, is resignation of the Ministry and an announcement of elections. Recent statements by prominent members of the Muslim League, including Members of the Interim Government, have been disquieting and in some cases very tendentious.

I greatly fear that if this kind of thing goes on there will be reaction on the other side. In any event to permit the continuation of these tactics to bring down the Ministry is likely to lead to very harmful results. These activities are being continued because it is hoped they will yield results soon. As soon as it is realized that they will not yield the results desired, they will gradually end. I am anxious therefore that there should be absolutely no misapprehension in this matter and that it should be made perfectly clear that such activities will not be allowed to influence events. Any kind of democratic Government would otherwise be impossible. What has happened in the Punjab will be repeated in a far more intense and dangerous form in the Frontier.

This I think is correct, whatever the appraisement of the present situation in the Frontier. In regard to that appraisement opinions may perhaps differ, but it is clear that a little more than a year ago the identical issues that are being raised today were raised at the time of the elections.<sup>4</sup> The only real test of public feeling after a general election is a by-election. There has been one by-election recently in the Frontier.<sup>5</sup> This was in regard to a Muslim League seat. It was retained by the Muslim League but by a much reduced majority. Indeed they came near losing it.

There is considerable danger in our misjudging the situation because of lots of violence and shouting. The people who support the Government do not and cannot indulge in unconstitutional and illegal activities. They have therefore to remain quiet while others do the shouting. On the 23rd March the Frontier Province celebrates "Martyrs' Day" on a very

<sup>4</sup> The 1946 election was fought on the specific issue of Hindustan or Pakistan, Hindu or Mussalman, Islam or Kafir. "Will you choose a mosque or a temple?" was the question put by the Leaguers to the voters.

<sup>5</sup> In the general election of 1946 the Nawab of Hoti contested in the Kamalzai rural constituency. Advantages of his feudal position and wealth helped him to defeat his Congress rival only by a little above hundred votes. In the by-election of February 1947, the Congress fielded its previous nominee against a comparatively weak League candidate but lost again by a margin of 600 votes. See also *post*, item 8.

big scale annually. This is a special day for the Red Shirts In order to avoid any breach of the peace they called this celebration off. Immediately the Muslim League decided to demonstrate on that day

It might interest you to know that in the United Provinces from 30 to 35% of the total votes cast in separate Muslim constituencies were against the Muslim League candidates Nevertheless by the luck of the election a far larger proportion of Muslim League candidates won. We have to accept that fact according to democratic procedure although we know that a considerable number of the Muslim electorate is against the Muslim League demands in the U.P Only five days ago I attended a vast gathering in a typically Muslim area of the U.P.<sup>6</sup> There were over 100,000 persons present at a Conference and a great number of these were Muslims, who had indeed taken considerable part in organizing that Conference.

I mention this fact to show that various totalitarian claims made may not be justified and this business of trying to decide political issues by threats of violence must not be allowed to influence our judgement of the situation. I am quite clear in my mind that the first thing to be done is to put a stop to this violence and to the policy underlying this violence Nobody can have a grievance when it is admitted that decisions will be made without compulsion. Violence breeds violence as it has done in India and if once it is made clear that violent tactics pay, then the belief in peaceful methods will fade away

I have been getting a large number of telegrams from D.I Khan. I suppose you have got them too People from D I Khan who live in Delhi are naturally very greatly agitated at what has happened and what is happening there They cannot get any news, they cannot go there except by air. Attempts to charter planes have failed It was our desire to send two or three competent observers there who could at least cheer up the people in their sufferings and send us a report of the present state of affairs An attempt is still being made to arrange this

I am afraid this letter is a very inconclusive and inconsequential one. You need not trouble to reply to it.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

<sup>6</sup> Nehru delivered the inaugural address at the 33rd session of the U.P. Political Conference held at Mau on 20 April 1947. See *post*, section 7(III), item 3.

7. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
1 May 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

Thank you for your letter of the 30th April which I received last evening. I am grateful to you for your courtesy in sending me reports of the conversations you had during your visit to the Frontier.

2. The impressions you have gathered may, no doubt, be justified by what you saw and heard.<sup>2</sup> Possibly, if you had had time and occasion to see more, you might have had some additional impressions which might have helped in arriving at a truer appreciation of the situation.

3. There can be little doubt that there is an upsurge of communal feeling. That requires no proof for the very fact of murder and arson on a large scale is proof enough. There is also little doubt that recent events, and more specially what has been happening in the Frontier Province itself, have affected the Tribes. While they have been so affected, it is difficult to say what the various divisions of feeling among them may be after reference to one or two grounds only. Undoubtedly the situation is an explosive one.

4. The first impression that one gathers from recent happenings in the Frontier is that gangster methods pay and that a deliberate policy of murder, arson and loot, of the most revolting kind, yields results. That is a most depressing thought.

5. Last night I received a report about certain conditions in the Frontier from Dewan Chaman Lal, M.L.A., who was good enough to visit

1. J.N. Collection.

2. In his letter of 30 April 1947, Mountbatten asserted that Khin Sihib was wrong in attributing the present agitation in the N.W.F.P. to the "machinations of the Governor and his officials". There was an upsurge of communal feeling which found vent in agitation against a Ministry which was regarded as being dominated by "the essentially Hindu Congress". His second impression was that the tribes were not prepared "to contemplate absorption into a State which they regard as likely to be dominated by Hindus". The Afghans were prepared to come to an accommodation with Afghanistan if there could be no satisfactory working arrangement with the successor Government of India.

Peshawar and D.I. Khan at my request.<sup>3</sup> This report brings out some other aspects of the situation. In particular it deals with the troubles in D.I. Khan and how repeated attempts by the Deputy Commissioner to prevent any mishap and to control the situation when trouble started were foiled by the Superintendent of Police and the Additional Superintendent of Police.<sup>4</sup> The Deputy Commissioner's orders were completely ignored. The charges made are very serious not only from the administrative point of view but because of the consequences that took place in D.I. Khan and the neighbourhood.

6. I feel reluctant to go into any details about the happenings in the Frontier Province not only because exaggerated and excited versions are put forward by rival groups, but also because I have a feeling that this is not a question of facts but of an approach to the problem. The major fact that stands out is of a deliberate policy being followed by the Muslim League in the N.W.F.P., a policy which has had the most ghastly results in human suffering. That policy is openly being pursued still and threats are held out of worse consequences. I have received information of a speech delivered by a colleague of mine in the Interim Government in Hazara District commanding the Muslim League adherents for what they have done and encouraging them to continue such activities Hazara has been a horror not easy to parallel

7. In the course of your conversations in Peshawar it would appear that the Ministry there was in the dock and had to defend itself. Little, if anything at all, is said about the Muslim League agitation and its results and the continuing policy that has been pursued by it.

8. It would be absurd to say that all that has happened in the N.W.F.P. is due to the machinations of the Governor and his officials. But I have little doubt in my mind that the Governor and some of his officials are

3. Chaman Lal spoke of the destruction and violence "shocking beyond measure". With the launching of the Muslim League's campaign "hundreds of murders had been committed, hundreds of shops and houses burnt or gutted and scores of people in various localities forcibly converted."

4. On 15 April a shop opposite the police station and a cinema at Dera Ismail Khan were burnt down Whole bazaars were gutted and looted while senior police officials looked on On the same day the city of Tank was similarly attacked and destroyed turning nearly 4000 men, women and children into homeless refugees The Governor, fully aware of the orders given for the arrest of ringleaders, openly fraternised with one of them

responsible in many ways for the present situation As I have previously informed you, it is my clear opinion that the Governor is completely unfit for the responsible position he holds. He has neither the capacity nor the impartiality to deal with it This applies also to certain officials in Waziristan. I find it increasingly difficult to continue to be in charge of a Department which is responsible in some way for the activities of officials who function wrongly and are completely beyond my control

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 8. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
3rd May 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

With your letter, dated 30th April, you sent me various papers relating to your visit to the Frontier. Among these was an account of your meeting with the Governor of the N.W.F.P. and the four Ministers on the 28th April.<sup>2</sup>

On reading through all these papers I was considerably surprised both at some statements of fact and at the general approach to various problems. I wrote to you a brief letter expressing my distress.<sup>3</sup> There was much in those papers to which I wanted to draw your attention. But I refrained from doing so, because, as I pointed out in my letter of the 1st May, the basic question was one of approach. I should like to make it quite clear that I do not agree with several things that have been said in the course of the various interviews and the fact that I am not drawing particular attention to each matter should not be taken to mean that I agree with it.

This morning I had a trunk telephone call from Dr. Khan Sahib, the Chief Minister of the N.W.F.P. He told me that he had received

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 10, pp 591-592

2. At his meeting with the Governor and four Ministers Mountbatten explained that Jinnah had been told that violence must first be called off before there could be any question of fresh elections in the Frontier to determine the party to which power should be handed over

3. See the preceding item

the report of the meeting you had with the Ministers. He added that so far as paragraphs 15, 16 and 17 were concerned,<sup>4</sup> there was obviously a grave misapprehension and they did not correctly represent what he or his colleagues had agreed to. It was not possible for me to go into any detail on the telephone, but I understood that he had sent a note on the subject to the Governor with the request that this may be forwarded to you.<sup>5</sup>

I need hardly repeat that this matter of the Frontier Province is not only important in itself but has far-reaching implications in the all-India context. Any special treatment of the Frontier Province in regard to elections, or the imposition of Section 93, Government would create a very grave situation. I have already written to you about the Congress Working Committee's reactions to such a proposal. I am personally convinced that those reactions are correct.

It is unfortunate that there should have been a misunderstanding in regard to what was said at your meeting with the Ministers. Sometimes wrong impressions are formed for lack of precision in language. It is desirable, above all, that there should be no misunderstanding of respective viewpoints. In this matter the Frontier Province Ministry is concerned, of course; but all of us are equally concerned, because of the wider implications involved. I trust, therefore, that nothing will be taken for granted and if there is any misapprehension it should be removed immediately.

4 Paragraph 15 " His (Viceroy's) orders from the British Government were to transfer power in the manner which the Indian peoples themselves wanted To do this would involve ascertaining whether the existing Government still had a valid mandate, before power was handed over. He asked the Ministers if they agreed Dr Khan agreed and the others did not demur."

Paragraph 16 "H E. then pointed out that he would have to go into Section 93 Government for two or three months before this to ensure fair elections and that he felt sure that the present Government would wish the elections to be fair."

Paragraph 17 "H E asked whether he should invite the Congress and Muslim League high commands to send representatives to observe the elections in the province The Chief Minister freely agreed to this, although Dr. Khan Sahib reiterated that there was no Muslim League in the NWFP."

5 In his reply of 10 May 1947, Mountbatten said that he had received the amendments suggested by Khan Sahib to the minutes of the meeting but no detailed discussion of them was necessary as he (Mountbatten) no longer was of the view that it was necessary to proclaim Section 93 in the Frontier Province or that fresh elections should be held there Instead, he had recommended to the British Government to hold, at a suitable date when the partition of India was clearer, a referendum on the electoral roll, which would be conducted by an organisation under his control

In the course of our conversations I think I mentioned to you the result of a by-election in the Frontier, which was held about two months or so ago. I am sorry I gave you perhaps a slightly wrong impression. I have now enquired into this matter and the correct figures are as follows.

In the 1946 general election the Muslim League candidate won the seat at Mardan. The voting was as follows :

Muslim League	8354
Congress	8185
Muslim League majority	169

In the 1947 election the voting was as follows:

Muslim League	8941
Congress	8353
Muslim League majority	588

There was thus no change, though there was a slight increase in the Muslim League majority from 169 to 588. The total voting went up from 16539 to 17294. Both the candidates increased their pool, though the increase on the Muslim League side was somewhat greater. On the whole, it might be said that there was no marked change

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

# COMMUNAL DISTURBANCES

## III. Miscellaneous



**1. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
11 April 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

I have shown Mr Gandhi the statement<sup>2</sup> you gave me. He is willing to sign it jointly with Mr. Jinnah and the Congress President Professor Kripalani I wanted to make sure from Kripalani about this also, but he has gone away to Jaipur for a day and is returning on the 12th morning I have no doubt that he will agree to sign it. If it was considered necessary my other colleagues and I would also gladly sign the statement. But most of us are of opinion that it will be better for only three persons to sign it, namely, Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Jinnah and Professor Kripalani

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N Collection
2. See *ante*, section 7(11), item 6, fn 3.

**2. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
14 April 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

This afternoon Sir Eric Mieville informed me by telephone that you had received the following telegram from Mr. Gandhi:

Just received your message.<sup>2</sup> Many thanks. I had comparatively quiet journey. I am of opinion that President of Congress should also sign. You should know reason for the exclusion of President of the Congress. However I leave final decision to you and Panditji

1. J.N Collection
2. Mountbatten telegraphed to Mahatma Gandhi on 13 April 1947. "Unless statement bears your signature alone Mr Jinnah will not sign May I therefore appeal to you to agree" He also informed him that Nehru was agreeable to leaving the matter to his (Mountbatten's) discretion

This has placed me in a somewhat awkward position. The proposal that the statement should be signed by Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Kripalani was originally made by you, I think. I do not know if you had mentioned it previously to Mr. Jinnah; but I gathered that he had agreed to this and laid special stress on Mr. Gandhi signing it. Mr. Gandhi consented to do so. Now for some special reason Mr. Jinnah insists on the exclusion of the Congress President's signature. As Mr. Gandhi points out in his telegram, the reason for this should be obvious. Apart from the reason, it involves a certain courtesy to the Congress and the Congress President. It may also lead to some misunderstanding in the public mind.

2. I take it that it is your desire, as it is ours, to produce the maximum effect on the public mind. That would have been achieved by these three signatures. I am quite sure that the absence of the Congress President's signature will make a difference. So far as we are concerned, I had told you previously that we are all prepared to sign. Even now if it is considered feasible, some or all of the Members of the Interim Government could sign it, in addition to Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Kripalani.

3. Mr. Jinnah has often stated that Mr. Gandhi does not represent the Congress organisation. He is in a sense correct. Why then does he want Mr. Gandhi's signature in his individual capacity and wish to exclude the Congress organisation as such? Presumably because he wishes to emphasise not the organisational character of the signatures but the fact that, according to him, Mr. Gandhi represents some kind of Hindu India and Mr. Jinnah some kind of Muslim India. Mr. Gandhi, of course, represents no such thing whatever Mr. Jinnah may represent. In such matters we have to proceed on an organisational basis plus, if necessary, the addition of some name of authority and importance. We dislike greatly this approach of Hindu and Muslim India.

4. I have consulted both Mr. Kripalani and such other of my colleagues as are available here and all of them dislike very much this suggested change in the procedure. It becomes a little difficult for us to act when a certain proposal is made to which we assent and then this has to be changed because Mr. Jinnah changes his mind or is otherwise not agreeable. At the same time we are exceedingly anxious that everything should be done which might help in putting an end to the violence and conflict that is going on. We realise the value and importance of Mr. Jinnah putting his name to the document and we would not like to come in the way of any such appeal being made.

Our difficulty is that it is quite clear that Mr. Gandhi himself strongly disapproves of the exclusion of the Congress President's signature. He has cast the burden on you and me to decide.

5. In view of the considerations I have placed before you above if you can find some proper and honourable way out of this impasse, I shall be grateful. If that is not possible, then I must leave it to your judgement and final decision as to what should be done. I shall abide by that.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 3. Appeal Against Coercion to Join Pakistan<sup>1</sup>

For over 40 years we have struggled for India's freedom and now I strongly feel that within one year we will be completely free. We have, therefore, to take our next steps after great consideration and care.

But when the country is undergoing great changes, such as from slavery to freedom, we must expect some troubles. We must expect new problems to develop themselves. These new problems and difficulties will be facing us in various spheres of life. Though we are suffering on account of these difficulties we must bear them bravely and with courage. We must not lose heart.

India is not yet fully free, but it is already being treated by other nations as one of the biggest countries of the world. Foreign countries are extending such treatment to India because they know that India will shortly, by her progress and strength, be one of the biggest countries of the world.

The country is facing two major problems, economic and communal. Economic problems will have to be faced even after freedom has been won, but the communal problem has to be solved immediately. It must be made clear that the communal quarrels lead us nowhere. Pakistan cannot be achieved by resort to force and violence.

Already in India there is a sense of dawning freedom. Even the strange troubles and new problems, which have sprung up of late, are

1. Inaugural address at the U.P. Political Conference, Mys., 20 Apr. 1947.  
*From National Herald*, 22 April 1947.

an index of the great change that is coming They are typical of a period of transition when anti-social elements seek to assert themselves and have to be dealt with firmly and determinedly.

The two main problems before the country today are the poverty of the masses and the communal situation. Economic problems will demand No. 1 priority when the country is free but communal troubles must be stopped at once.

People should keep calm in the face of provocation and should not resort to inhuman deeds. As regards the disturbances in Noakhali, Bihar, Punjab, Frontier, Bombay city and some places in U.P. it is an extremely distressing fact that men have behaved like beasts When men degrade themselves to the level of beasts, it badly reflects on the nation to which they belong If anyone thinks that by such villainous violence political ends will be achieved, it is a grave and a sad mistake.

It is India's misfortune that communal troubles are taking place at a time when the country should stand united. Those who are resorting to force for achieving political ends are very much mistaken. Such methods will not help them. India cannot force any part of it to remain in the Union, but such bits of it as want to get out have no right to break away other parts which do not want to do so. Moreover, in the world of today, small countries have no future until they align with a big one Therefore the loss will be of Pakistan if it wants to keep out of Hindustan.

The Muslim League can have Pakistan if they wish to have it, but on the condition that they do not break away other parts of India which do not wish to join Pakistan. I hope that the promoters of Pakistan will realise their mistake soon. Breaking away from the rest of the country will not help them

It is a matter of shame that people who have fought the British Government so bravely are quarrelling among themselves on a very low level, stabbing each other in lanes like cowards. Gandhiji has been preaching nonviolence for the past 30 years But I am glad that Mr. Jinnah also adheres to a belief against violence. I hope those who follow Mr. Jinnah will give up the use of violence

I am sorry that I had to be away from the people of my province for the last several months But only important matters had taken me to Delhi where my services were needed. Looking into your faces I derive strength because, after all, you are the real strength of India. Leaders, however great they may be, owe their strength to the support of the masses.

British rule is going and has got to go and it will soon go. It will be a great event but our responsibility will also increase a hundred-fold.

It is this that you must realise and rise to the occasion. The greatest need is to keep united at present when the British are leaving the country and Indians have to take power from their hands. I am fully aware of your difficulties but would ask you to realise that great changes are taking place in the country. Times like these are necessarily accompanied by disruption of the smooth functioning of life. People must have patience. There is no justification to lose heart. India is in the midst of a mighty revolution.

Chittu Pandey<sup>2</sup> was my old and brave comrade whose death has pained me. In the by-election for Chittu's vacant seat in the U.P. Assembly the Congress candidate, Mr. Jagannath Singh,<sup>3</sup> is being opposed by a non-Congressman. It is amazing that people today think of opposing the Congress

I urge the people to vote for the Congress candidate on principle and the rival is bound to go down.

I condemn bribe-takers and black-marketters. They must be dealt with severely and with a firm hand. There should be no place for them in society

2 (1891-1946), prominent Congressman of Lucknow.

3. A Congressman of Ballia, imprisoned several times during the freedom movement, won the by-election to the UP Assembly from the Ballia (north) constituency in April 1947, re-elected to the UP Assembly in 1952 and later became a member of the UP Legislative Council

#### 4. To Govind Ballabh Pant<sup>1</sup>

Mussoorie  
22 May 1947

My dear Pantji,

I am here for just four days and am returning to Delhi on Sunday next. On my way down I shall spend a few hours in Dehra Dun and visit the Indian Military Academy, St. Dunstan's, and meet some Congress colleagues.<sup>2</sup>

I am rather worried about the refugee situation that is developing in this province. I have no doubt you are doing all that is necessary in regard to it. The main problem is, of course, that of Hardwar. A minor problem is that of Dehra Dun where the richer people have

1. J N Collection

2. See post, section 9, item 12

gathered and are throwing about their money in buying up houses, shops etc., and generally upsetting everything. There is a growing feeling against them and I fear we might have a regular U.P. versus Punjab sentiment which would be unfortunate.

You will remember my mentioning to you the desirability of placing one of the war camps near Dehra Dun at the disposal of these refugees for the present at least. You said that this would require the permission of the Defence Department. I am sure this permission will be obtainable. This seems a quick way of dealing with the situation and canalising it. I hope you will look into this matter.

I expect to meet you in Delhi at the time of the Working Committee meeting. Gandhiji is due to arrive there on the 26th. Meanwhile disgraceful things are happening in Lahore. We have arrived at a crisis when there must be final decisions and final authorities to deal with every situation that arises

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

## 5. To Agatha Harrison<sup>1</sup>

Mussoorie  
22 May 1947

My dear Agatha,

It is ages since I wrote to you. And meanwhile I have had at least two letters from you. Since you wrote, so much has happened that your letters are a little out of date.<sup>2</sup>

I have come up here to Mussoorie for four days partly to see Indu and the children and partly just for a brief respite from Delhi. The tempo of work and change here increases rapidly though I am by no means sure that the movement is in the right direction. Mountbatten, I am sure, means well. I like him and his energy and his desire to get things done. That is a pleasant change from the last Viceroy.

For the present, however, we are in a sorry mess and the most ghastly reports reach us of what is happening in Lahore or Calcutta

1 J.N Collection

2. In her letters of 20 February and 15 March 1947, Agatha Harrison discussed the appointments of Mountbatten and of various Indian ambassadors.

or elsewhere. There appears to be a general disintegration of the administration and nobody seems to be completely responsible for it. I am more sure than ever of the rightness of what Bapu said last year that the first thing to be done is an immediate transfer of power to some Indian authority. The British civil servants neither want to deal with the present situation effectively nor are they capable of it. They feel that they have to go anyhow pretty soon, so why should they bother. There is often also a secret satisfaction that India is going to pieces. India will not go to pieces whatever happens though there may be difficulties and troubles ahead. But we are going to have a bad time and this will continue till some strong and determined authority can deal with the situation. The present authority cannot and will not.

I wrote to Mrs Edward Thompson and told her that I had received the letter from Edward. I am sure I have got his last letters with me somewhere, but I fear it is not an easy matter to dig them out, at any rate, till I return to Allahabad. I have no recollection of any newspaper article on the subject. I do remember getting his letter and of being greatly moved by it.<sup>3</sup>

Indu has come up here with the babes. They are all fairly well. I can manage to keep well even in the heat of Delhi.

Yours sincerely  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3 In her letter of 15 March 1947, Agatha Harrison had written that Mrs Edward Thompson had enquired whether Nehru had ever mentioned a letter "that Edward Thompson sent you two days before his death. It appears some stupid thing had been written here that he wanted you to know had no basis or truth in it, and just before he died he wrote a letter to you for whom he had a greater affection than perhaps any other person amongst his wide circle of friends."

## 6. To John Colville<sup>1</sup>

Mussoorie  
23 May 1947

Dear Sir John,

I am writing to you about a matter which normally does not come within the scope of our activities but which nevertheless concerns us greatly.

2. Some months ago there was a vacancy in the Allahabad High Court Bench. A temporary appointment was made to this of Mr. Mansur Alum.<sup>2</sup> This appointment was made against the recommendation of the Provincial Government and, I believe, most of the judges of the High Court. It created an uproar in legal circles in Allahabad and the province and it was openly stated that the appointment was in the nature of a scandal and likely to bring the High Court into disrepute. This had nothing to do with Hindu or Muslim as there were other Muslim candidates in the field.

3. I brought this matter to the notice of Lord Wavell. He had some inquiries made and he told me subsequently that the appointment was a wrong and improper one but that it was only for a few weeks and it would not be confirmed. When these few weeks lapsed, there was no confirmation and someone else was appointed as a permanent judge of the High Court.

4. Now there is going to be another vacancy in the Bench of the Allahabad High Court very soon and I understand from very reliable sources that every effort is being made again to get Mr Mansur Alum appointed as a judge of the High Court. The Chief Justice of the High Court<sup>3</sup> and his brother judges are strongly opposed to this proposed appointment and so is the Provincial Government. I have no doubt whatever that if by any chance the appointment were made in spite of this opposition, there will be considerable public resentment and charges of favouritism will be made. The appointment lies with the King, i.e., in effect with the Governor-General and the Secretary of State. It is just possible that some step might be taken unawares which might lead to considerable difficulty. I have, therefore, ventured to write to you on this subject so that no such step might be taken without the fullest consideration. I would repeat that the question is not a communal one, but one of competence and experience. Mr. Mansur Alum's record at the Bar is such that his claim for a judgeship is fantastic.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

- 2 Senior Standing Counsel to the Government of the United Provinces; acted as Judge of the Allahabad High Court, 22 July to 30 August 1946.
3. Kamala Kant Verma; Additional Assistant Government Advocate, 1933, Acting Judge, High Court, Allahabad, 1937, Puisne Judge, 1937, Chief Justice, 1946-47; subsequently Chief Justice of the Rajasthan High Court and then of Greater Rajasthan

## 7. Impracticable Proposal for Division<sup>1</sup>

India is awake and full of life today, and that is why although the country has not attained independence it has begun to rank among the greatest countries of the world

The credit for this is due to Mahatma Gandhi because he is not only a great political leader but one who has infused courage into the people and made them bold.

The Congress opposed the demand for Pakistan on principle and stood for a united India. It now demands division of Bengal and the Punjab also on the same principle. Those who are clamouring for partition will themselves see how impracticable and economically unsound it is

Many problems, some intricate though essential, such as controls, and some very distressing, such as the communal situation, are facing us, but bigger ones, such as national independence and bearing responsibility for the future governance of the country, must have priority.

Circumstances which induced us to form the Interim Government have entirely changed now and had later developments been foreseen by us, we would have perhaps refused to accept the offer. Old slogans which helped us to drive the British away from India have grown useless and out of date. Our fight is not yet over.

But we should strengthen the Congress with renewed enthusiasm and direct national dynamism, still intact, to right channels. The Congress still believes in India's unity though we had decided as long ago as 1942 not to force any part of the country to join the Union. The demand for division of the Punjab and Bengal has brought realism to the League politics but what is in store for us in future no one can say.

1. Address at a meeting of Congressmen of Dehra Dun, 25 May 1947. From *The Hindustan Times* and *The Hindu* of 27 May 1947.

## THE I.N.A. PRISONERS

## 1. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
17 February 1947

Dear Lord Wavell,

I have just received your letter of the 17th February,<sup>2</sup> rather late in the evening, concerning the I.N.A. resolution<sup>3</sup> which is likely to come up tomorrow in the Assembly.

2. This matter has been before us in some shape or other for some months now. I remember writing about it to the Defence Department early in September last year and discussing it with the Defence Member on several occasions. Then it came up before the Assembly, and we had little doubt that we should accept the resolution on behalf of the Government as the House is more or less unanimous on it. But in deference to the views of the Commander-in-Chief we got the resolution postponed.

3. Early in January this matter was raised again and numerous consultations and conferences followed. The Defence Member wanted to put it up before the Cabinet and he drafted a summary for it. It was, however, not included in the Cabinet agenda.<sup>4</sup> It was our desire, which we expressed repeatedly to you and the Commander-in-Chief, that we should not embarrass either of you and that the I.N.A. prisoners might be released before the matter came up before the Assembly. There was no doubt about the decision of the Assembly or of the Cabinet. Unfortunately we could not convince you.

4. You will appreciate that we have done our utmost to postpone this matter and to give every consideration to your views and those of the Commander-in-Chief. We have given earnest thought to every implication and possible consequence. Having done so we told you, and in this matter Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan completely agreed, that we had no other

1. J N. Collection

2. Wavell advised Nehru not to commit the Government of India by accepting the resolution on the I.N.A. which was being moved in the Assembly on the next day.

3. In his resolution Abdul Ghani Khan had recommended immediate release of the I.N.A. prisoners

4. Baldev Singh had put forward for discussion in the Cabinet a paper recommending that I.N.A. men serving sentences should be released and that all I.N.A. men should be paid forfeited amounts of pay and allowances. Wavell refused to refer Baldev Singh's proposal to the Cabinet

choice in the matter but to press for the release of these few men. That release, if the Commander-in-Chief agreed to it, involved no grave issues. But the refusal to release them in the present context, and after the matter had come up before the Assembly and been discussed so thoroughly, did involve the gravest issues. It meant that the more or less unanimous views of the Assembly and the Cabinet, which undoubtedly reflected public opinion, were to be overridden and not given effect to. This raised the issue to an entirely different constitutional level. I cannot conceive of any Government functioning when in a relatively simple matter like this it has to move against the wishes of the Assembly and of public opinion and its own convictions.

5. When the resolution comes up before the Assembly we cannot take up a neutral attitude. We have to express our sympathy with it and to say that we shall consider it favourably. That is the least we can do if we are to give expression to the views of those whom we represent. I might inform you that the matter has come up before the Congress Party meetings also on several occasions and we have been criticised for our delay in dealing with it.

6. I have indicated above the general line I intend to follow in the course of the discussion tomorrow. What exactly I shall say then will depend on the circumstances. I regret greatly that we have been unable to convince you or the Commander-in-Chief that the course we have suggested was not only the right one but the only possible one in the circumstances. We have not ignored the arguments that you put forward; indeed we have given them the fullest consideration. But in such matters the decision of the Assembly, supported as it undoubtedly is by the Members of the Cabinet and the public in general, must be considered as final.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 2. Mountbatten's Record of Interview with Nehru<sup>1</sup>

On Tuesday evening without any previous warning Nehru informed me

1. Telegram from Mountbatten to Pethick-Lawrence, 2 April 1947 Extracts  
*The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 10, p 97

that resolution demanding release of I.N.A. prisoners would be moved in Legislative Assembly on Thursday, and that he was in no doubt it would be carried unanimously since Muslem League had joined forces with Congress on this matter.

2 He informed me that Lord Wavell's veto could no longer be regarded as operative and asked me for my instructions as to how I wished the Government to handle the situation.<sup>2</sup>

3. He pointed out that the Cabinet had agreed among themselves to keep Wavell's use of veto a secret as they feared that a leakage of the fact would have disastrous repercussions in the country and on the position of the Viceroy, since it was widely believed that H.M.G. did not intend Viceroy to use his veto at this stage.

4. He told me that as representatives of popular parties in a Coalition Government neither Congress nor League Members could remain in the Government if forced to turn down such unanimous resolution on so important a subject

2 On 19 March 1947 at a Cabinet meeting all the Members proposed that the I.N.A. men should be released but Wavell overruled them

### 3. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
2 April 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

Thank you for your letter of the 2nd April enclosing a copy of the draft formula as agreed to by the Commander-in-Chief.<sup>2</sup> I appreciate that the Commander-in-Chief has been trying to accommodate himself, in spite of his strong feeling in the matter, to what I suggested to him.

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 10, pp 95-96.

2 Mountbatten said that Auchinleck had agreed to Nehru's proposal that the Judges of the Federal Court should examine the proceedings of various courts-martial but asked for an assurance that it would not be used as a precedent

2. This very strong feeling of his, however, in this matter has made me realise, even more than before, the difference in the British and Indian approach to this as well as other problems I think I can understand fully the outlook of a soldier in matters of army discipline. Few persons will disagree with the proposition that discipline must be maintained in an army and that political considerations should not be allowed to interfere with it. But the army consists of human beings with human feelings. In India the soldier has a dual pull—that of army discipline and what he conceives to be loyalty to his country. If both these act in the same direction, then all is well. If they act in contrary directions, then he is torn between these two loyalties. The obvious way out is to avoid any such conflict by combining the two conceptions, the army standing for the country. Normally this happens in a free country, but that has not been so in India. The result has been, as is well known, that some of the brightest of our youths have kept away from the army. Those who have joined it have had to suffer from this inner conflict.

3. Every Indian, whatever his views may be, can understand this and appreciate it. That is why a very large proportion of Indian officers and men in the regular army have sympathised with the I.N.A. regardless of individual merits or demerits. In the present case also there is a cleavage between the general opinion of most Indians in the army and the opinion of British officers

4. About the assurance that the present proposal would not be used as a precedent, I have already said that I do not intend to do so. Apart from other reasons, I would not like to have to pass through again the ordeal which I have had to face in recent weeks I have had a feeling, however, that the Commander-in-Chief has shown a lack of faith in me in regard to my handling of this situation Having told him how I intended doing it, I would, of course, have endeavoured to do so I have to face and attempt to satisfy not only a large audience in the Assembly but also a vast public outside. Whether I would succeed or not, I do not know. Even if I succeed in a formal sense, it would be of little help if I left a feeling of dissatisfaction and discontent in the minds of my hearers and others. I have to deal with the situation, therefore, not in a formal, brief and concise manner, but rather in a way so as to bring the whole picture before the members of the Assembly and then gradually to concentrate on the narrower issue. I have not to deal with soldiers whom I can command, but sensitive human beings who resent nothing so much as an order.

5. I have just received your second letter dated 2nd April with which you have sent me the revised formula<sup>3</sup> as approved of by the Chief Justice.

6. I am grateful to you for the trouble you have taken in this matter.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. The revised formula stated that, in view of the special circumstances, the Government would request the Commander-in-Chief to call in Federal Court Judges as advisers to examine the proceedings of the courts-martial and the desirability of reviewing the findings and sentences. The need for modification in any of the cases would then be reported to the Commander-in-Chief.

#### **4. Minutes of Viceroy's Second Miscellaneous Meeting<sup>1</sup>**

The Viceroy said that he was "in a cleft stick" as an unconditional release of the dozen I.N.A. men with "brutality charges" against them would involve the loss of the Commander-in-Chief, and as he was endeavouring to act as the constitutional head of a constitutional government the last thing he wanted to do was to exercise a veto.

Pandit Nehru said that it was a fair statement. The matter was now coming before the new Viceroy for the first time. Lord Wavell had cabled London before taking the serious step of exercising the veto. He felt there was nothing in these cases which need impair the discipline of the Army, but they valued the opinion of the C.-in-C. It had been known to them his term might expire early this year but they had wished him to continue. The fact that the C.-in-C. felt strongly on this matter was a big consideration with the Government. Otherwise they were ready to have gone on regardless of the consequences. Speaking

1. Held on 2 April 1947 on the eve of the Central Assembly meeting on 3 April to discuss Abdul Ghani Khan's resolution calling for release of the I.N.A. prisoners. Besides Mountbatten and Nehru, Liaquat Ali Khan, Baldev Singh, Auchinleck and Campbell-Johnson attended the meeting. Extracts from *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol 10, pp 75-83

as a politician he did not see that there would be serious consequences. This issue had been before the Assembly for over a year. Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan had himself been on the point of accepting a similar resolution when he (Pandit Nehru) was absent abroad but had postponed doing so. The resolution was coming up again tomorrow. There was now no possibility of postponing it once more and no excuse for doing so. There was no doubt about the feeling in the House or in the country. This was not due to any liking on the part of the people for brutality. The whole question was considered in its political aspect and in no other. The people's view was that violence was in the air and that these men had been acting under their own code.

Pandit Nehru said that he would like to appeal to the C.-in-C. He knew the Government's difficulty, the Government knew his. Let them try to find some way out. The Government did not want to put the C.-in-C. in a false position or he to put the Government in one.

Liaquat Ali Khan said that it was difficult for people to understand why no action had been taken against 20,000 and only against 12. Mountbatten explained that it was because of Auchinleck's efforts that the rest had been released.

Pandit Nehru said that the list of 12 men seemed to indicate that they should be regarded as a group. Did the C.-in-C. distinguish between any of them?

Auchinleck said that each case had been taken on its merits. The list actually included 15 names, 10 of whom were guilty of brutality and 5 had deserted with arms in their hands. Altogether 3 were already released having served their sentence, which left 12.

Pandit Nehru agreed that the 5 were not in the same category although they had probably come under I.N.A. influence.

The Viceroy felt that if the political and military offences could be separated in the public mind the Government's difficulty would be largely solved.

Pandit Nehru observed that no one in the Government sympathised with brutality. The difficulty was the size of the I.N.A. issue and the fact that these men were identified with the I.N.A. Some of the I.N.A. men were good, some bad. The issue was dying but these things kept it alive. It was not a question of condoning a crime. These men had undergone some punishment already. He felt that Burhan-ud-Din and Rashid were the two most important. He had met Burhan-ud-Din who was an attractive fellow and had misbehaved from folly or fear or whatever it was.

The Viceroy asked whether that was not the way all crimes were committed.

Pandit Nehru suggested that there was a difference. Pandit Nehru then asked the C.-in-C. whether he could refer the matter to some special committee, apart from his usual action, for review.

Auchinleck thought that thus the whole competence of his judicial authority would be undermined. Replying to Liaquat Ali he said that Shah Nawaz had not been let off but cashiered which was a disgrace.<sup>2</sup>

Pandit Nehru asked why was it that everyone felt so strongly about the I.N.A. The people were not all mad. The truth was that the normal rules did not apply. The punishment of cashiering these men would have usually ruined a man's career but it had not ruined these men. It all depended on what motive was imputed by public sentiment.

Returning to the case of Shah Nawaz, Liaquat Ali asked if Shah Nawaz, who was guilty of waging war against the King and of abetment of murder, was remitted what justification was there for carrying on with these cases?

Pandit Nehru said that he had emerged after 20 years' retirement from the Bar to plead in these cases and that there had been technical evidence of murder as far as Shah Nawaz was concerned but no responsibility. Shah Nawaz was, in his view, a fine man.

The Viceroy said that he could not believe that public opinion could not make a distinction when the charge was of stringing a man up and arranging for a whole company to flog him to death and when Pandit Nehru asked whether this was not regular court-martial procedure, the Viceroy and Auchinleck both pointed out that it most certainly was not.

Pandit Nehru then said he wanted help in the Assembly. He would like to ask that a High Court Judge should review the evidence. The political element would be removed, only the brutality examined.

Objecting to this Auchinleck said that it would cast doubt on the fairness of the procedure that had taken place under his command.

Pandit Nehru explained that the only way to meet the House was to be frank. He did not wish to have Lord Wavell's over-ruling veto mentioned. He suggested saying something along the lines that they appreciated public feeling but at the same time realised the importance of the C.-in-C.'s opinion and were not anxious to do anything without his approval. The C.-in-C. had considered the problem, not from a political angle, but in terms of brutality. Other cases should be cited and the effect on Army discipline stressed. He would add that there had been regular reviews of the cases but in this instance he was prepared to ask the High Court Judge to review not the whole case, not whether justice or injustice had been done, but just to review the position in an advisory capacity.

2 See *Selected Works*, Vol 15, p 22

Liaquat Ali thought that that would not be effective as the justice and the evidence would have to be reviewed. The Viceroy said that if they were to grip the matter firmly now it would come to an end, but if they temporised it would arise again.

Pandit Nehru felt that it was not a question of gripping things. They had gone too far, but if the civilian element was introduced it might provide an honourable way out.

The Viceroy agreed that this might be so. But Auchinleck asked whether, if the Government was not strong enough to resist the I.N.A., they could withstand the recent mutinies of the Royal Indian Navy or the claims to release anyone else guilty of flouting military discipline.

Pandit Nehru explained once again that they were passing through a period of transition when it was difficult to apply rigid rules. The matter probably did not apply to the Royal Indian Navy. It applied simply to certain people who were now in prison. Looking at it from the viewpoint of the armed forces without, of course, the inside knowledge or experience of the C.-in-C., it seemed to him that the I.N.A. issue was itself disturbing Army morale. Many people within the Indian Army welcomed the leniency being shown. The matter was constantly being argued out and the best thing was to put an end to it now.

Auchinleck said he was not prepared to condone anything which might be said to cast doubt upon the integrity of himself or of the officers under his command who had handled these cases.

Pandit Nehru observed that the dignity of the Legislative Assembly was also involved and pointed out what his own position was in relation to the Assembly. If he was compelled to go against the wishes of the Assembly, he would have to resign. His request to the C.-in-C. was that a judge should be appointed by him who would report to him.<sup>3</sup>

Before the meeting adjourned Pandit Nehru stressed that he wanted to bring out in his speech tomorrow the distinction between political and military offences and expressed uncertainty as to whether the charge of waging war against the King was still on the chargesheet.

The Viceroy replied that these men were in gaol now simply on grounds of brutality.

3. Auchinleck did not accept this proposal. He also preferred to reserve his position on the Viceroy's suggestion that the Chief Justice might be appointed to conduct the enquiry by the Government.

## 5. Release of the I.N.A. Prisoners<sup>1</sup>

Sir, I should like to intervene at the early stage in this debate in order to place the views of Government in regard to this resolution<sup>2</sup>. This resolution in some shape or other has been before the House, I believe, for over a year. It may well be asked—why is this matter kept pending so long, not merely as a resolution, when it was fairly obvious what the views of the House were in this matter and, if I may say so, what the views of the people were. It may be asked—why has this resolution to be brought up again and again, sometimes postponed and then been given new life? I think the House and the country are entitled to know and I propose to put facts before them with as much frankness as possible.

The House knows well that many of us have been in the past intimately connected with these I.N.A. trials. We organised defence committees. Why did we do so? Because we thought that this matter had something much more than a merely technical military aspect. It had a larger aspect, because we thought that in this matter, as in many others, the average soldier was placed in a very difficult position. Normally speaking everyone in this House will agree that in an army the most absolute discipline should prevail. Otherwise, it ceases to be an army. It goes to pieces and if there is lack of discipline, it has to be dealt with. But in a case like India up till recently there have obviously been different pulls. There is the pull of discipline and loyalty to the discipline of the army. There is also a pull of another loyalty and a larger and perhaps a more imperative loyalty to what one imagines to be the good of the country. Now, if those two loyalties come into conflict, as they have done in the past, not only in the army but elsewhere too the result is an inner conflict in the individual. And it would be a foolish thing to judge that inner conflict in technical terms and to say that this man has erred and misbehaved. Well, as it happens, it is the best type of individual who has to suffer that inner conflict. It is the man who does not feel that way who is usually insensitive to the vital things of life. Therefore, when we have to face these inner conflicts, these rival pulls, we have to decide after taking everything into consideration. Of course, the right way is to avoid this inner conflict and to avoid

1. Speech in the Legislative Assembly, 3 April 1947 *Legislative Assembly Debates, Official Report*, Vol IV, 1947, pp 2943-2948

2 Nehru was intervening in the debate on the resolution moved by Abdul Ghani Khan recommending immediate release of the I.N.A. prisoners

dual loyalty and to have a single loyalty to the country and the army. Then there is no difficulty in the way except personal or domestic difficulties. The difficulty arises when a country, as India is today, is in a period of transition or even before the transition, when it is not a free country. We have had to face that difficulty and the I.N.A. people had to face that difficulty and in a very peculiar state of affairs they took a certain decision. I do not know how anyone of us here would have acted if similarly situated. No one can say unless he has to face a difficult situation how he will act at that time. I have little doubt in my mind that those people *en masse* were impelled by feelings of patriotism and the desire to serve their country. It was because of that belief, which, if I may say so, was strengthened in the course of those major trials that took place here, that we helped in the defence of those cases and subsequently

Now, I do not wish anyone to imagine that we consider every person in the I.N.A. as a hero and a patriot. Even in the best of groups or organisations everybody is not a hero and a patriot. There are good people and bad people and middling people, who are neither too good nor too bad. But undoubtedly in judging of a situation like this, we had to take the major facts into consideration, and those facts led us to the attitude that we adopted in regard to I.N.A. and nothing that has happened since has led me to believe that we were wrong. In fact, I am convinced as ever that we were right in the attitude that we took up then. We have, therefore, subsequently also tried to help the I.N.A. people in regard to service and means of finding livelihood. May I say, because a reference has been made by Pandit Balkrishna Sharma to this matter,<sup>3</sup> that so far as Government is concerned, every avenue of service is open to these I.N.A. men except the military and the police at present. So that all civil employment is open to them provided, of course, they are competent, and not merely because they are I.N.A. men.

Now, this has been the general position. We took up that position in regard to the trials on the political issue because we felt that it would be exceedingly wrong for people placed in that difficult position to be charged with what is technically called waging war against the King. And, if I may say so, we succeeded in establishing that contention for various reasons, among them being the very brilliant defence offered by Mr Bhulabhai Desai. And may I say also that in this matter

<sup>3</sup> Bal Krishna Sharma had said that everyone desired that those men be given employment and Government departments should help them to find employment

the Commander-in-Chief, who was most intimately concerned with the army, with the discipline in the army and with all that happened in regard to the I.N.A. and who naturally in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief must have resented all these happenings which went against the discipline of the army and against his whole outlook as a soldier, did take up an attitude which was a wise attitude and a far-seeing attitude. I am for the moment referring to things in general; I am not obviously thinking of individual cases for the moment. I am talking of the general attitude which the Commander-in-Chief took up in regard to this matter. I think it was from every point of view a very statesman-like attitude and even at that time I ventured to congratulate him and I would repeat that word of congratulation now. The House will appreciate that however much we may try to agree on many matters, there is a fundamental difference yet in the Indian outlook and the British outlook on many problems. It may be that in future when India is a completely free and independent country that difference will vanish. But what I am trying to point out is this: anything that we may take up and whether we agree about it or not, the approach and the honest approach on both sides is often different. One starts with different data, a different view of life, different environments, call it what you like, and it is because of these that it was an easy matter for me or for any Member of this House to have taken up a certain attitude in regard to the I.N.A. a year or a little more than a year ago. But it was not an easy matter for the Commander-in-Chief, with his military background and with his British background, if I may say so, to take up the general attitude that he did in this matter. But he did so, I have no doubt, because he appreciated to a certain extent at least what was in the Indian mind; what was not only in the Indian civilian mind but what was in the Indian military mind also. We looked upon this question then and subsequently as a political matter which had impinged itself on military discipline. Nevertheless, it was a political matter and we were only opposed to any punishment being given on political grounds, even though that had involved a breach of discipline. Now, that was so and, if I may say so, that was admitted then by the Commander-in-Chief and the Government of India all the time. There was punishment, of course, in the sense that these I.N.A. people were dismissed from the army and they did not get various allowances, arrears, etc., which, as discharged soldiers, they might have got. That is true. But apart from that, punishment in the sense of imprisonment etc. was ruled out. That was the general policy adopted. But then a distinction was made in regard to other matters which strictly had nothing political about them, which had in fact nothing special about them, which if they had taken

place not in the I.N.A. but in the regular army itself would be liable for punishment.

Now, I am not for the moment entering into the merits of any individual case or trying to place before the House a certain distinction that was made then in regard to the actual breach of army discipline by so-called waging war against the King and acts which are considered inhuman or brutal being indulged in, quite apart from the question of discipline. Obviously that is a matter which takes this out of the scope of pure politics or of pure I.N.A. There are cases happening in the regular army from time to time when officers or men are punished for some such inhuman act which degrades the traditions of the army. There are at the present moment people being punished, not I.N.A. I am referring to, but other people in the regular army who have been court-martialled for such acts and who are undergoing punishment therefor. So that, the way I am trying to put before the House the position is, as it was placed to me and before me by the Army authorities, that this matter was considered by them, not on a political plane, but purely on the plane on which they might have considered any matter connected with the regular army. They said that if we are going to treat our regular army men for certain acts in a particular way, are we debarred from treating I.N.A. men for identical acts in the same way because they happen to be I.N.A. men and therefore they are not liable for even a common offence of the army or common offence against humanity. The House will remember that I am not dealing with individual cases, I am putting before the House the argument advanced by the Army authorities before me. Apart from that, on any such matters, any Government must very largely rely upon the advice of those who are put in charge of the army. Obviously the Government of India in such matters, and in many other matters, more especially in non-political matters, must inevitably take the advice of the Commander-in-Chief. If there is any radical difference between the viewpoint of the Government and the Commander-in-Chief, well, then the Commander-in-Chief may be changed. But obviously the man in charge who has been placed there has been made responsible and must shoulder that responsibility by giving advice to Government on these matters. Inevitably therefore when this matter came up, we asked for the advice of the Commander-in-Chief. My own reaction, as well as the reaction of most or, if I may say so, all my colleagues was that this is not a debatable matter, this is not a matter which need take up any time of the House. We had been engaged in these I.N.A. trials and we felt that the sooner the whole I.N.A. business of trial and punishment ended the better from the larger point of view because it was obvious that the general public did not like

these punishments to continue. So, we thought that the matter was not one for much argument.

Nevertheless, of course, we had to refer to the Commander-in-Chief and the Defence Member. Then we had long talks and discussed this matter in a friendly way all aspects of it, and some of the arguments that I have put forward before the House were placed before us by the Commander-in-Chief and others and every aspect of this question was explored. We found that the Commander-in-Chief did not think that it was such a simple matter as we thought it to be. He felt that there were all manner of other issues involved, that there would be repercussions and that he himself was not personally convinced in regard to taking any steps to release them. That put us in a difficulty, because obviously we did not want to proceed in such a matter which fell within the special purview of the Commander-in-Chief without his full approval and consent. It is because of this that there has been considerable delay in dealing with this question. Honourable Members have from time to time asked questions in this House and I am afraid that the answers that have been given to them have seldom been satisfactory. Because they were not complete, it was not possible to discuss the matter in answer to a question and because we ourselves were considering it and discussing it, we could not say very much about it. I must ask the forgiveness of the House for those incomplete and unsatisfactory answers to questions during the past few months. The matter came up again and again in various forms and the House, occasionally, expressed a feeling of resentment at this delay in dealing with this question. I can well understand that with the background which the House has But may I say that few questions during the last few weeks or months have troubled my mind and taken up my time more than this question. We did not forget it at any time. We considered it, we discussed it amongst ourselves, we weighed the pros and cons of everything and because of this difficulty that we could not get over, we could not come to any decision about it. Otherwise, we need not have waited for a resolution of this House. So, this was the position.

Now, at the present moment if I may give some facts to the House, there are, I believe, seven persons involved. There are others, of course; they belong to other categories. There are more or less seven persons involved in this resolution. Two of them have been sentenced to 14 years rigorous imprisonment, two to seven years and one to three years, and one to two years. All these persons though charged with waging war have also committed offences against humanity and were generally sentenced. But we are given to understand that the charge in regard to waging war had nothing to do with the sentence except in so far as those persons were

dismissed from the army. Now, Sir, they have all been sentenced for acts which may be considered, which were considered, by court-martial as brutal and inhuman and totally unbecoming of a member of the armed forces, something for which any person in the army, I would remind the House, would have been punished. Now, the Honourable Mover of the resolution, I remember, mentioned something to the effect that it is idle to talk of brutality and inhumanity because all war is brutality and inhumanity.<sup>4</sup> If you train a man in brutal methods what is the good of punishing him if he indulges in them later. While agreeing with him completely in the view that war is an extreme brutality and it is becoming more and more brutal and inhuman, I still differ from him completely in the conclusion that he has arrived at; and in the idea that because war is brutal we should condone every kind of brutality which would reduce the level of human existence to that of brute. The question then becomes one of fact and not of theory, what exactly has happened; not merely the fact that it has happened but the surrounding circumstances and the context of it and how it happened, because the same act may be judged in a particular way if you know the context of it. Even murder is considered justifiable sometimes, if it is in self-defence, for example. Therefore it is a question of facts and the circumstances surrounding that particular thing, not of mere theory that so and so was in the I.N.A. and therefore he is innocent. That of course has no meaning; or that so and so belongs to this and that group and therefore he should be punished or should not be punished. When we come to the facts we find that the courts-martial have dealt with these cases. I am not in a position to criticise these courts-martial on the way they dealt with these cases; I have no reason to do so except one that when we see that these things took place at a moment when certain passions were aroused among the people on either side it was not perhaps a very suitable moment for a dispassionate consideration of this problem. However the point is that regularly appointed courts considered these matters and they came to certain conclusions. It is not very easy to say that the courts were wrong or that their judgement on the evidence was wrong or that their conclusions were entirely baseless. Therefore, what exactly can we do about it? As I informed the House, when originally we considered this matter we thought there was no difficulty about it. But the difficulty arose when we found that the Com-

4. While moving the resolution on 18 February 1947, Abdul Ghani Khan had said, "A soldier is trained to be a brute, he is to be a brute if he wants to be a soldier. To teach a man for 20 years how to kill and slaughter his fellowmen and then sentence him to prison because he kicked or flogged one is ridiculous."

mander-in-Chief did not view it in the same light. He was reluctant to give effect to any such resolution as has been moved in this House, and he pointed out his own difficulties and his own views in the matter which were formed after considerable study and consideration of what he thought would be the repercussions in the army. Now it is obvious that those of us who form the Government here only continue in Government till the House so pleases. We are not a Government as our predecessors in these benches were who could go their way whether the House liked them or disliked them.

I am going to place the views of Government before the House and if the House agrees with them well and good; if it does not the House will tell us what to do. A government functions according to its own lights; if those lights do not commend themselves to an Assembly the government gives place to another government. No government functions blindly with other people's lights. Therefore it is for the House to decide and we shall abide by their decision. If we agree with the decision of the House we shall gladly submit, if we disagree we shall also submit but others will carry out that decision.

Now in view of this present position that I have stated before the House, the question arises as to what is the best way of dealing with this. I think the last speaker Mr Sharma said something to the effect that we do not know what the facts are. Now it is an odd thing that we should come to a final decision without going into the facts because, as I said, it is a question of facts as apart from the political aspect. So it reduces itself to a question of facts Will some impartial authority consider the facts? That becomes the question. Quite apart from that question, however, there is the other question which it is not perhaps easy for some of us to judge, namely, matters concerning the army and repercussions on the army and its discipline, etc. In this present case therefore the conclusion that we arrived at was that it would be a desirable course for these matters to be referred to the Federal Court for their consideration and for their report to the proper authority. This has nothing to do with our confidence in the Commander-in-Chief. I think he acted a year ago with considerable foresight and statesmanship. We believe that quite apart from the I.N.A. matter he has acted in ways which show that he wants the good of India to prevail. He has served India faithfully, and of course normally we are bound to accept his advice in all such matters. But in view of other circumstances this course has been proposed by Government for the consideration of the House. I would like to read out what steps precisely we would like to take if the House so agrees Although Government do not question that in this matter the Commander-in-Chief has

acted throughout in good faith and according to his lights for the good of India and the armed forces, they are, in view of the special circumstances of the case, prepared to request that the available judges of the Federal Court should be called in as advisers in this matter only and without creating any precedent whatever. What we have in mind is that before any further consideration is given to the matter by the Commander-in-Chief these advisers should examine the proceedings of the various courts-martial, give their opinion as to the desirability of reviewing the findings and sentences in each case and report whether in their opinion the findings and sentences should be altered or modified in any manner. That is the position of Government I have tried to place before the House the various factors that have been considered by us during these weeks and months. I have tried also to make the House realise that this matter in its present aspect can hardly be considered as a political matter but as a matter infringing the domain of humanity. I do not, and I cannot, express an opinion on individual cases even if I could. It would not be proper for me to do so. But since it is a matter of fact and a non-political matter of fact in regard to certain acts committed by certain individuals, it is right and proper that it should be inquired into by a proper authority as I have suggested on behalf of Government. Obviously there are other considerations which the House will no doubt bear in mind. We are passing through a somewhat difficult period in India, and we have to bear all these other aspects in mind before we take a step light-heartedly. It is because of all these matters that we have given the most careful consideration to it, and placed this suggestion for the approval of the House. If the House approves this kind of reference to the judges of the Federal Court, then I would request the mover of this resolution not to press his resolution in the form in which he has moved it, because it does not fit in, but for the moment accept the reference as has been suggested by Government.

Mohammad Yamin Khan: Since the brutalities, if at all, were committed outside India and the courts-martial were opposed to the I.N.A., the matter should be referred to a court-martial appointed out of the officers of the I.N.A. to find out whether there were brutalities or not.

Jawaharlal Nehru: That is a remarkable suggestion. May I say that in great many of these cases the charges are in regard to certain acts committed in prison against prisoners, not in regard to operations outside, and surely the best judges of that are neither those who are against the I.N.A. nor those who are in favour of the I.N.A. but competent people who can consider these matters.

President: May I have one position clarified in this respect? Is it proposed to have a specific amendment moved?

JN: I want no amendment. I merely stated what we propose to do and unless the House disagrees with it we want to do it. We want no specific amendment.

President: Then I take it what is meant is that in case the House is agreeable the Honourable Member may withdraw his resolution.

JN: Yes, Sir.<sup>6</sup>

5. The resolution was withdrawn.

## 6. To Claude Auchinleck<sup>1</sup>

8 April 1947

Dear Sir Claude,

Thank you for your letter of the 7th. It was good of you to write to me in such a friendly way and I am grateful to you for it.

It is true I felt a little distressed at what I thought was your lack of faith in our adhering to our word. I did not think of this in any personal sense. And thus there was a sense of weariness at having to discuss the same thing over and over again and repeat the same arguments. As a soldier and a man of action you will appreciate this. I am myself too indifferent a politician to like long drawn out talks which end vaguely and without producing results. And yet circumstances have conspired to make me play a politician's role and to indulge in these very arguments.

Thank you again for all you have said in your letter.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Auchinleck Papers, The John Rylands University Library of Manchester.

## DEFENCE POLICY

## **1. Defence Policy and National Development<sup>1</sup>**

It is not an easy matter for a layman to consider the intricacies of the problem of defence in the modern world. Probably even an expert will find it difficult to balance all the factors, many of which are uncertain. Defence cannot be considered in a vacuum. It bears an intimate relation to international affairs, foreign policy, industrial development, scientific research and the resources of the country. The expert soldier knows much more about the technique of defence and the building up of defence forces than a layman does. But the expert soldier necessarily looks at the problem from his own narrow viewpoint and he is apt to ignore many other considerations.

2. Our difficulties are increased by the fact that great changes are taking place in the science of war and it is quite possible and indeed probable that new methods of warfare might change the whole conception of war.

3. We have two able memoranda before us—one containing the proposals of the Commander-in-Chief with the Defence Member's comments, and the other a note by the Finance Department. These are helpful in considering the problem. I am inclined to agree with much that the Finance Member says in his note, though I do not wholly appreciate his approach or his conclusions.

4. It is impossible for me to enter into any discussion of the technical aspects of the problem or the details of the cost of maintaining defence forces. Obviously such cost must bear some relation to the revenue and the resources. It cannot swallow up the greater part of the revenue leaving little for other services and development. At the same time defence is obviously a primary need and inadequate defence is waste of money.

5. In considering this problem we must proceed on certain assumptions:—

- (1) That we are going to provide for defence by armed forces.
- (2) That India will soon be independent and will have to rely on her own resources.

1. Note, 3 February 1947. Extracts. J.N. Collection

(3) That India will follow a peaceful policy which means that it will not prepare for or think in terms of any aggression or dominion over any other country.

Defence thus becomes purely defence against external aggression or internal disorder.

6. It is an axiom today that there can be no defence without a sufficient industrial backing. A country which has not got that industrial background cannot fight a modern war or defend itself for any length of time, however big its army might be. The defence forces indeed are merely an extension of the industry of the country. When one thinks of defence, therefore, one has to think first of all of industrialisation on a vast scale.

7. Modern defence as well as modern industry require scientific research, both on a broad basis and in highly specialized ways. Even more than before, war is controlled by the latest scientific inventions and devices. If India has not got highly qualified scientists and up-to-date scientific institutions in large numbers, it must remain a weak country incapable of playing a primary part in a war.

8. Though it must be an essential duty for the defence forces to support civil authority in the maintenance of order, we need not consider this aspect of the problem in any detail. It is enough to think of the requirements of defence against external aggression or invasion.

9. In the world today it would appear that there are only two countries which can be considered first-rate military Powers capable of resisting aggression or of indulging in aggression themselves. These are the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union. No other country can effectively defend itself without aid. Indeed, potentially speaking, the only two other countries that come into the picture from the point of view of resources are China and India. But even these two countries cannot be considered as major Powers in the military sense for at least a decade.

10. The probable use of atomic energy in warfare is likely to revolutionise all our concepts of war and defence. For the moment we may leave that out of consideration except that it makes it absolutely essential for us to develop the methods of using atomic energy for both civil and military purposes. This means scientific research on a big scale.

11. If unfortunately war breaks out in the future in spite of every effort to keep the peace, it is likely to spread and become a world war.

Nevertheless the two chief countries involved would be the U.S.A and the Soviet Union....<sup>2</sup>

17. India's strongest factor, apart from morale and industrial development, would be her vast spaces and the determination of her people not to submit whatever the consequences.

18. In order to build up this morale and determination, it is essential that the defence forces should consist of Indians only with no foreign element. Only this will give these forces the character of a national army and enthuse the people. This is important from the point of view of defence apart from other factors. It is clear also that an independent India cannot have foreign forces or even foreign officers in her defence forces. That would be a negation of independence and would actually come in the way of proper defence. That would also lead to her entanglements in international conflicts and increase the danger of invasion.

19. It is perfectly true that we cannot start preparing for a danger when the danger is actually upon us. Previous preparation is necessary in order to give us some kind of insurance. But what exactly do we prepare for? If we are in the midst of war we have to do the best we can without thinking in long-distance terms; but organising in peace time for possible war gives us some leisure to lay down foundations of defence more effectively.

20. Normally speaking there is no danger of external invasion for some years to come. But even if there was some danger, it is safer to have a sound foreign policy to make India secure and strong enough to defend herself in the future which may mean ten years hence than to waste our energy and resources on something which may help a little now but which comes in the way of developing in the future effective defence forces drawing their strength from science and industry.

21. The most important thing therefore, looked at narrowly from the point of view of defence alone, is the rapid industrialisation of the country. The next important thing is the morale of the country and the armed forces and this can be brought about chiefly by independence and the complete nationalisation of the Indian Army. Our policy being one of defence, we shall have to build up our defence forces accordingly. Thus the Air Forces would have first priority. The army, whatever its numbers, must be thoroughly efficient and up-to-date in the mechani-

<sup>2</sup> Paragraphs 12 to 16 omitted

cal sense. The Navy would occupy a third place. Indeed the development of the Navy at present is hardly indicated if it comes in the way of Air Forces development. Whether we have a cruiser or two in the Navy or not does not make the slightest difference in terms of defence.

22 The numbers of the land forces also do not make very much difference, provided of course that the number is sufficient not only to meet internal troubles but also to serve as a nucleus for development during a crisis. Such development can be facilitated by widespread training of a militia which would serve as the reservoir for the army. There is an advantage in this which I consider important. A measure of military training, such as the militia might have, will not make them efficient but it would raise the standard of efficiency all over the country.

23. In the context of the present situation it does not make very much difference whether we have a land army of 200,000 or 300,000. Even the latter figure is not big enough and is totally inadequate to face a major Power. What is necessary is a big enough army which can expand fairly rapidly if needed. The disadvantage of having a relatively large army is not only the additional cost which inevitably would have to come out of the money for development, but that it would compel us to engage foreign officers and this would result in the spirit of the army and of the country not changing to a great extent.

24. The line of approach should, therefore, be:—

- (1) Completely nationalised defence forces from the outset of independence.
  - (2) No foreign forces in the country.
  - (3) Rapid industrialization and provision for scientific research
  - (4) The employment of British officers, where they are considered absolutely essential, as advisers.
  - (5) The development of the Air Force. The British squadrons of the Air Force should not remain in India. I understand that it would be easily possible to have a completely Indianised Air Force of 10 squadrons immediately if we take back some Indian maintenance units in the British air forces in India. The withdrawal of the British squadrons would leave us these ten Indian squadrons only. We must carry on with them and at the same time try to add to them as rapidly as possible. I believe that it is easily possible to add ten or twenty squadrons in the course of the next few years.
- It is important also that we develop an aeroplane-making factory

in India—something much bigger and more self-contained than the Bangalore factory.

- (6) The Navy for the present should not be increased, and cruisers and the like, which cost a lot of money without giving adequate protection in any sense, should not be kept.
  - (7) The land army should be kept more or less on the pre-war level in regard to numbers, but should be highly mechanised and efficient. It should be officered entirely by the Indians with a few superior British officers attached, where necessary, as advisers.
  - (8) A militia should be gradually built up to serve as a reservoir for the armed forces and at the same time to help in raising the physique, discipline and the well-being of the nation.
  - (9) A machine-making industry should be started to provide for the production of the latest mechanical devices for warfare as well as to help in the industrialisation of the country. This should be state-owned and controlled.
  - (10) A scientific man-power committee should be appointed to prevent waste of such man-power as can be used for the development of science and technique and to make the best provision for trying out latent talents.
  - (11) An Atomic Energy Commission should be appointed for research work in the proper utilization of atomic energy for civil and other uses.
  - (12) Planned development of industry, especially heavy industry, should be organized. This will include the rapid increase of the power resources of the country which are essential for any industrial growth
25. It is not possible for me to make an estimate of the cost of all this. The principal idea is that even in the interest of defence as large a sum as possible should be diverted to the building up of heavy industry and power. The Air Force should be increased. This Air Force should consist not of long-range bombers but of fighter planes. The Navy should be kept at a standstill. The Army should have relatively small numbers, more or less on the prewar level and should be highly mechanised. All this would probably result in an actual saving on the army, navy and air force, and a much larger expenditure on the development of science and industry. This would mean that after a few years, say from five to ten, we will be in a position, if we thought it necessary and if the conditions warranted it, to increase our defence forces very greatly on that industrial and scientific foundation which would have added to the wealth of the country also. Possibly we take a risk during this period of not being strong enough to defend ourselves. That risk

### 3. To Baldev Singh<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
8 April 1947

My dear Baldev Singh,

Thank you for your two letters about the future of the army. Our general discussions on this subject in committee appear to me to be fairly satisfactory.

2. As regards the other two points that you have raised, I am quite clear in my own mind. There can be no weakening of any kind on the subject of India's future connection with the United Kingdom. India must go out of the British Commonwealth. Apart from our own personal views in the matter, there is not the least shadow of a doubt that any other proposition would be rejected completely by the Indian people. The Constituent Assembly is proceeding on that basis and will undoubtedly frame a constitution for a completely independent India. That is almost common ground with everyone now.

3. This, however, does not rule out treaties of alliance with Britain or any other arrangements to our mutual advantage. But all such arrangements can be considered only on the basis of India's independence. For my part I am quite clear that this is to the advantage of all concerned, even to the advantage of India's defence. We shall be in a far safer position as an independent country than as one tied up to Britain in any way. Britain is incapable of defending India in the future and the main result of being in the Commonwealth would be to drag us into the Commonwealth's foreign policies and animosities. No major Power threatens us today. Even in the future there is no such threat except possibly from the U.S.S.R. I do not myself believe in that threat for a number of reasons which I need not specify. But that threat only comes into consideration if we are entangled in the power politics of the Great Powers.

4. But quite apart from all this reasoning, the fundamental fact has to be accepted that no solution but that of independence can be accepted in India whatever the consequences. We have thus to shape our policy accordingly and make it perfectly clear to others.

5. I am also clear in my own mind that we cannot possibly continue to have British officers in key positions in the Indian Army. Some in-

dividual Britishers might be so engaged directly or selected from the British Army. Also we may have British advisers. This may mean some weakness in the higher ranks for some little time to come. But that is the only way to build up a self-reliant defence force as well as to give reality to India's independence.

6. I believe also that the communal problem, bad as it is today, will only be solved when we stand completely on our own feet both politically in an independent India and in the defence forces. Any intermediate stage will continue to create trouble and doubt and will encourage the reactionary and communalist elements.

7. I hope you will continue to take a firm line on both these issues. There is no other way.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 4. To Baldev Singh<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
14 April 1947

My dear Baldev Singh,

Thank you for your letter of April 14th<sup>2</sup> with which you have forwarded to me a note by the Commander-in-Chief.<sup>3</sup> I have read both with care. The difficulties pointed out by you and the Commander-in-Chief cannot be ignored and have to be taken into full consideration. Nevertheless I have no doubt in my mind as to what we should do in the circumstances. Indeed we have no possible choice. Under no conceivable circumstances is India going to remain in the British Commonwealth,

1. J.N. Collection
2. Baldev Singh had wondered whether it could be possible, while adhering to complete independence, to "continue our connection with the British Commonwealth for specific, limited and well-defined purposes for a given period after June 1948." He felt that, as far as the armed forces were concerned, "in tradition, technique, specifications, equipment and science of war, we are so completely mixed up with Britain that it will in any event take a little time before we are able to stand by ourselves."
3. General Auchinleck, in his note of 8 March 1947, had expressed grave fears for the future integrity of the armed forces, if they were completely nationalised by June 1948, as he believed that experienced Indian officers, including technical experts, were not available in adequate numbers.

whatever the consequences. This is not a question for me to decide or for any few of us to decide. Any attempt to remain in the Commonwealth will sweep away those who propose it and might bring about major trouble in India.

2. We must, therefore, proceed on the assumption, which is a practical certainty, that India will go out of the British Commonwealth about the middle of next year.

3. That again does not mean that we cut away from association with the Commonwealth. If the change-over is a friendly one, as we hope it will be, it will inevitably be followed by friendly arrangements about many matters, including possibly defence. But all such arrangements will have to be based on India's independence.

4. What the Muslim League does in regard to this matter has little significance. Either the Muslim League fits into the picture of an independent India, or it wants to cut itself away from it by separating certain areas. These areas, it is clear, cannot include Eastern Punjab and Western Bengal. Even if these areas are cut off, there will be many common things for some years and these will include defence. All this is not so much a matter of choice but of inevitable necessity.

5. In these circumstances if every single British officer goes, I shall accept that without losing a night's sleep. I know all the difficulties that will be caused thereby. But we shall have to face them, and indeed if such a thing happens, all manner of new forces and new enthusiasms will come into existence in the country. Personally I have no doubt in my mind that British officers, or a good number of them, will stay on and it will not be easy to get rid of them. But I am prepared for the consequences either way. I can understand a professional soldier's viewpoint. But I also know something of recent happenings in Europe and elsewhere where vast armies have grown up in two or three years' time. They were good armies and though they lacked perhaps the professional touch which is important, they had something in its place, i.e., enthusiasm which is also important. The real difficulty is always in the topmost ranks. It is not easy to develop suddenly the higher staff officers or men who can command effectively a hundred thousand men at a time.

6. I think that the only position that we can take up is to state clearly and categorically that India will be completely independent next year. So far as we are concerned we shall continue British officers in our

service as we may continue civilian British officers. But they will have to serve the Indian Government. This may be by arrangements with the British Government or otherwise. How this will be done will have to be gone into carefully. If they do not choose to serve in these conditions, they can go. But it is not easy to go when there is nowhere to go to.

7. I think we should wait for a month or two at least for further developments in the political situation. By the end of June I imagine there will be much more clarity in it, and that will help us to consider other problems. Meanwhile the fullest insistence should be made on nationalisation.<sup>4</sup>

8. Personally I think that this is no matter for the Cabinet. Our policy flows clearly from Attlee's pronouncement. But I have no objection to the Cabinet considering it though I think that a suitable time for such consideration will be a month or two later.

9. In any event immediate steps should be taken to attach Indian officers to British officers holding key positions. I do not know what the Muslim League can do in this matter. Of course they can obstruct and hinder. But that should not prevent us from going ahead.

10. If you like we can discuss this matter some day in our informal meeting of Cabinet Members.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. Baldev Singh felt that the directive to effect complete nationalisation of the armed forces could be issued only by the Cabinet and not by the Defence Member on his own responsibility. But he expected strong opposition from the Muslim League if the matter were taken to the Cabinet.

## 5. To Baldev Singh<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
14 April 1947

My dear Baldev Singh,  
I have your letter of April 14th regarding the use of troops in com-

1. J N. Collection

munal disturbances.<sup>2</sup> I entirely agree with what you say in paragraphs 1 and 2. The question is what should be done in the circumstances. I rather doubt if we can take up the question in Cabinet and deal with it as a matter of principle. Inevitably each case has to be judged on the merits. It is possible, of course, to discuss this matter and lay down some general rules. But in applying them the individual cases will have to be considered. You know that in the Punjab both you and I laid the greatest stress on full play being given to the military authorities. Indeed we suggested martial law. But the other authorities concerned, whoever they might have been from the Governor downwards or upwards, did not agree to it. To begin with, the military authorities were given some latitude. But it appears that later they were somewhat restricted in their activities.

2. I suggest that you might discuss this matter with the Viceroy yourself and ask him whether it should be put up before the Cabinet. Probably he will be unwilling to do so just at this stage because he intends making some political moves and he might think that any stress on the military at this stage would not be helpful. He hopes that the political line that he is going to take up will lead to a rapid diminution of communal trouble. Whether his hopes are justified or not is another matter. Anyhow it would be worthwhile for you to discuss this matter with him.

3. I confess that I do not understand your grievance about the stores matter.<sup>3</sup> I am quite clear in my mind that you have done a good deal with finance, eminently profitable for the Defence Department. What you want is an assurance that you can plan with the certainty that your plans will not be upset for lack of money. That is exactly the assurance that has been given with the full authority of the Cabinet. As a matter of fact there is nothing hypothetical about it. It is a dead certainty, though the exact sum may not be certain. Probably it will be bigger

2. Baldev Singh feared that the morale of the troops was being affected since they were required to take instructions from the "communal-minded civil officers" when called out to quell communal disturbances. As civil authorities were relying more and more on troops to deal with such situations, he suggested that the Cabinet should entrust the military with wider powers, once their aid had been invoked.
3. Baldev Singh criticised a Cabinet decision, which was based on the proposal of the Military Financial Adviser, for a saving of nearly Rs. 24 crores by using some stores, and doubted whether his departmental plans could be implemented in view of the "hypothetical" nature of this source of income. He also resented the lack of "backing of our group" whereby his own proposal for an additional sum of Rs five crores was not accepted.

than the cautious figure supplied by the Military Financial Adviser. Even if it is not bigger ultimately, undoubtedly it is more than 5 crores per annum for the next two or three years.

4. Suppose you had been told that you can have five crores annually. That would not have been any surer guarantee. Whatever we may say now, every year we shall have to consider our budget figures, and if unfortunately circumstances are such, we may have to revise them. But with the income from the stores handed over to the Defence Department, there is far less uncertainty; indeed there is none. You have actually got cash or the equivalent of cash which cannot be whittled down in future, whatever the pressure on the budget. Therefore you are in a perfectly safe position to embark on all your plans. I am quite sure that you have done well in this business. You will appreciate that this is a purely financial matter and not a defence matter. All we are concerned with is that a certain assurance for a certain sum be given to you. You have got that assurance in the best possible way.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 6. Employment of Gurkhas in the Indian Army<sup>1</sup>

The Honourable Member for External Affairs said that when the Cabinet decided on 23.10.46 to employ Gurkhas in the post-war Indian Army<sup>2</sup> he had no reason to believe that the decision was not final, and in pursuance thereof, both he and the Honourable Defence Member had conveyed the decision unofficially to various Nepalese officials with a

- 1 Extracts from the minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on 17 April 1947. Lord Mountbatten Papers, Broadlands Archives Trust, Broadlands, Romsey, Hampshire.
- 2 It was decided that some Gurkha battalions (possibly 9 or 10) with Indian officers should be retained in the Indian Army. This decision was not conveyed officially to the Nepalese Government since it was linked with the question of the attitude to be taken by the Government of India towards the declared wish of His Majesty's Government to negotiate with the Government of Nepal for the enlistment of Gurkhas in the British Army.

view to ascertaining whether Nepal would be agreeable to Gurkha troops being officered by Indians. As Mountbatten had pointed out,<sup>3</sup> the decision did not mean any new departure in our policy but rather the continuance of an existing practice. To break off our connection with Nepal at this critical moment and treat the subjects of Nepal as foreigners would not only be alien to the thought of both the Governments but would probably render Nepal hostile to the new India now in the making. Moreover, although it could not be said that we were short of manpower for our Armed Forces, the Gurkhas, who had a fine military record extending over a hundred years, would be an asset to our army.<sup>4</sup>

3. Initiating the discussion, Mountbatten had said, "The question was not really whether India should employ foreigners in her Army but whether she should not show special consideration to Nepal and continue her connection with that country which went back a long way."
4. The Cabinet reaffirmed its decision that Gurkha battalions should be retained in the post-war Indian Army on condition that they would have Indian or Gurkha officers Liaquat Ali Khan, the Finance Member, however desired it to be recorded that he and his colleagues of the Muslim League were opposed to having any foreign nationals in the Indian Army.

## 7. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
26th April, 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

In accordance with your suggestion yesterday we are arranging to send Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai on behalf of the External Affairs Department and Brigadier Rudra<sup>2</sup> on behalf of the Defence Department to Nepal. Sir Girija Shankar is our most experienced diplomat and is the best choice we could make in the circumstances. Both of them will be leaving tomorrow with General Lyne.<sup>3</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. R/3/1/147, I O L.R., London.
2. Ajit Anil Rudra (b. 1896); joined the G.H.Q., India, as Liaison Officer, South-East Asia Command; became full Colonel in May 1945; appointed Military Director of Morale at G.H.Q. with the rank of Brigadier; was Secretary, Indian Army; G.O.C., Madras Area; retired in March 1952.
3. Major-General Lewis Owen Lyne (1899-1970); Military Governor, British Zone, Berlin, 1945; later Director of Staff Duties, War Office; retired 1949.

8. Telegram to the Maharaja of Nepal<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
26th April, 1947

Your Highness's<sup>2</sup> recent communication to Minister<sup>3</sup> regarding question of future employment of Gurkha troops in British and Indian Armies has been conveyed to me. Government of India thank you for it, and suggest that it would be helpful if informal and exploratory discussion could be arranged before matter is considered further. Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai and Brigadier Rudra have accordingly been deputed to begin journey to Nepal tomorrow (Sunday, 27th April), and will travel in the same aircraft as Major-General Lyne and his staff officer. The talks they may have with Your Highness and the Nepalese Government will be purely informal and exploratory and will not be intended to form the tripartite conference which Your Highness mentioned in your letter of the 23rd April to Minister.

2. I trust Your Highness will be so good as to receive the Government of India's representatives

With my best wishes.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1 R/3/1/147, I O L R , London

2 Padma Shamshere Jung Bahadur Rana, succeeded to the post of Prime Minister in 1945 but was forced to abdicate in 1948 when his attempts to democratise the administration produced diehard reaction.

3. Lieut -Col Sir George Arthur Falconer; British Ambassador to Nepal, 1947-51.

9. To K.M. Cariappa<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
29th April 1947

My dear Cariappa,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your letter of the 25th April.<sup>3</sup> I quite understand and

1 J.N. Collection

2 (b 1900); joined Indian Army, 1920, Major-General, 1947, Commander-in-Chief, 1949-53; High Commissioner to Australia and New Zealand, 1953-56

3. In his letter of 25 April 1947, Cariappa had feared that the disintegration of the forces would imperil the security of India He urged that the army be kept intact "at any cost" for the "good of the country."

appreciate the disturbance in your mind in regard to certain developments here. Most of us share that disturbance. It is a bad thing even to think of divisions of our Armed Forces I should like to avoid it almost at any cost. Yet sometimes events are too powerful and it is wise to let them have their course for a while. I do not know how things will shape themselves in the near future. But of one thing I am convinced that ultimately there will be a united and strong India We have often to go through the valley of the shadow before we reach the sun-lit mountain tops.

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 10. To Baldev Singh<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
29th April 1947

My dear Baldev Singh,

Some days ago you wrote to me and sent me a copy of a letter of Gopalaswami Ayyangar. On thinking over the matter I feel that it will be very desirable even to have at least one cruiser in the Navy. This will not be any good from the point of view of defence, but it will help greatly in forming a nucleus for the Navy which can expand if there is trained personnel. I understand that the purchase of a cruiser need not be related to our post-war Defence budget Provision can be made otherwise for it immediately.

2. I am quite clear that the provision about stores in the Defence budget is not a bogus one. Indeed the question of its being bogus does not arise There are stores and of this there is no doubt From other sources I have got to know that they are valued at even a higher figure than what has been mentioned to us In considering them in connection with the Defence budget we have not to think in terms of cash because the whole budget is for the future We have to think only in terms of the total approximate provision In this total undoubtedly the Rs 5 crores from the stores can be included All this is, of course, entirely provisional because the future itself is uncertain But the point is that

from the financial point of view we can certainly plan with this additional Rs. 5 crores in view. You are interested in planning for the future now. Any expenses this year or the next do not come into this estimate of the future army. Thus the cruiser also does not come into it except in so far as the running costs may come in.

3. I have recently heard that about ten days ago a large number of aircraft were sold by auction at Jodhpur for ridiculous prices. Many small planes, comparable to the Howards, were sold for about Rs. 200 a piece, and one or more Dacotas were sold for Rs 5000 each. The planes are said to have been in quite a good condition. If this has occurred, it is amazing. I wish you would enquire into the matter of these disposals. Indeed something must be done to check these disposals.

4. I saw the other day a telegram sent from my Department to H.M.G. saying that we do not want any reparations from Japan except some kind of a naval tug. I do not know at whose instance this was sent. I suppose the Defence Department suggested it. It does seem to me absurd to ask for a tug. We should have asked for a cruiser from the Japanese navy or at least some destroyers as part of reparations for India. These would have been useful for training purposes even if they were not quite up to date. I wish you would enquire into this matter.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 11. General Lyne's Record of Interview with Nehru<sup>1</sup>

I had asked to see Mr. Nehru to say good-bye to him before leaving for the U.K. On May the 6th I had a thirty-minute talk with him at his house. Sir Girija Bajpai was present throughout.

Mr. Nehru began by asking me what I thought about our visit to Nepal. I told him that I thought it had gone off very well. As I saw it, the main object of the visit was to dispel in the Maharajah's mind any doubts he might have as to the desirability and propriety of the employment of Gurkha troops in the Indian and British Armies; also to find

<sup>1</sup> New Delhi, 6 May 1947. Extracts R/3/1/147, I.O.L.R., London.

out whether he was really in favour of the proposal. I thought we had succeeded in dispelling any doubts in His Highness's mind and he was very emphatic that he was strongly in favour of the proposal, provided the Government of India and H.M.G. both approved of the plan.<sup>2</sup> I further said that it had been the greatest pleasure for me to work with Sir Girija Bajpai and right from the start we had worked as a team.

Mr. Nehru said that he was glad that it had gone off so well. He pointed out that the present time was a very difficult one from the political angle and many things were in a state of flux. In this connection he mentioned the ever pressing problem of Pakistan. He said that all these things made it very difficult to reach a final decision in a matter such as the future employment of Gurkhas. For the next two weeks or so, they had a very heavy programme before them. However, he quite realised that "some sort of decision" (those were his exact words) must be reached soon.

Mr. Nehru then went on to ask me whether I agreed that the Maharajah said that Nepal put India first and that, if India objected to the employment of Gurkha troops by H.M.G., Nepal would only provide them for India. I said that that was hardly my recollection of what His Highness had said. The Maharajah continually emphasised how necessary it was for Nepal and India to be great friends. He also pointed out that Nepal and Great Britain were old and close friends. I had understood him then to say that he would not contemplate any scheme for employment of Gurkhas under either Government, which was not fully approved by the other Government. We did not pursue this point.

Mr. Nehru then asked me what I thought of the possibility of India taking all the Gurkhas, and loaning some to the U.K. I said that this was a completely new suggestion to me, but at first thought it appeared to have very grave disadvantages and I could see no advantages. I hoped Mr. Nehru would elaborate this proposal, but he did not do so. I formed the opinion, however, that he and Sir Girija had talked it over before I arrived and I think it may appear again.

Mr. Nehru asked me whether His Highness had discussed with me the question of what would happen if Gurkhas found themselves in opposite camps. I said that he had done so both at our tripartite discus-

2. At a meeting with the representatives of the British Government and the Government of India, held at Kathmandu on 1 May 1947, the Prime Minister and Supreme Commander-in-Chief of Nepal welcomed the proposals to maintain the Gurkha connection with the armies of the United Kingdom and India, provided "the terms and conditions at the final stage do not prove detrimental to the interest or dignity of the Nepalese Government" and that men of the Gurkha regiments "will not be looked upon as distinctly mercenary".

sion and when he saw me alone. I told him that the idea of our being at war with India was so fantastic, as not to be worth considering. However, if he wished it, some safeguard could be put in the agreement to ensure that Gurkha troops could never be on the opposite side to their fellow countrymen. Mr. Nehru then went on to ask me whether we had any aliens at present serving with the British Army, and what would happen in the event of our being at war with the country from which they came. I explained that we have a number of aliens at present serving in the British Army. They do not assume a British nationality, though their period of service counts towards naturalisation if they wish to do so. In the case of the late war, we took great pains to ensure that Italians serving in the British Army did not fight on the Italian front. We then got into a rather abstruse discussion about international law, which did not lead anywhere and had little point in connection with the Gurkha proposals.

Mr. Nehru said that he hoped, if we employed Gurkhas, we should not give them a much higher rate of pay than India were prepared to do. I told him that I had every hope that our pay code for Gurkhas would be in line with the Indian pay code, provided this was not reduced. We thought it only fair in addition to give an overseas allowance. Mr. Nehru laughed and said that the Indian soldier got so little at the moment that it could hardly be reduced lower.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Nehru concluded the discussion by asking what the next step should be. Lyne said that after a political decision had been taken by the Indian Cabinet, a detailed plan for the employment of Gurkhas in the Indian and British armies should be worked out in consultation with a delegation from the British War Office, to be followed by a final tripartite discussion with the Nepal Government before signing any agreement considered necessary.

## 12. The Role of the Army<sup>1</sup>

I am pleased to have this opportunity of visiting the Academy and of meeting the staff and cadets. The Commandant<sup>2</sup> had sent me advance information of what was to be seen and I have taken full advantage of it.

<sup>1</sup>. Address to the officers and cadets of the Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun, 25 May 1947. From *The Hindu* and *The Times of India*, 27 May 1947.

<sup>2</sup> Brigadier A.B. Barltrop, Commandant, Indian Military Academy.

I am pleased to see that the object of training at the Academy accords with my own ideas and I do not think that I can improve on the hundred per cent standard in the things set in the Academy.

We live in stirring times, and though many things occur which distress us, it remains a fact that India is now a live country full of dynamism. That dynamism is sometimes directed into channels that distress us. But the dynamism is still there and it is a factor to be reckoned with.

We have to do much hard work before our country can catch up with other nations of the world. And I have no doubt that it can be done. The young men under training at the I.M.A. will have their full part to play in the process.

An army plays an important role in the life of a nation. It must be representative of the people from whose roots it springs. The army, as an instrument of government, must be fully in tune both with the people and the government.

**FRONTIER POLICY**

## 1. Attack by Tribesmen on Inhabitants of Hazara District<sup>1</sup>

The Honourable Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru: (Member for External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations): Sir, the occurrences that took place in Hazara district last month were very unfortunate and I am sure the whole House will deplore these occurrences. The motions for adjournment read out look upon the affair from two different angles.<sup>2</sup> One seeks to condemn the Government for not taking action; the other seeks to condemn the Government for taking too much action. As a matter of fact, I think this particular incident, deplorable as it is, shows the extreme inefficiency of Government in this particular matter, and the extreme leniency of Government also in this particular matter. It is very difficult for Government, for me, to say much about preventing such things happening, because all these things are due to many causes, and it is not an easy matter unless some long distance policy is aimed at. Unfortunately such things do take place. Unfortunately even now people are kidnapped; raids take place on some scale and this House must accept the position that this sort of thing must be stopped. In the present instance, what happened has already been publicly stated in a number of communiques issued by the Government. We have tried to take the public fully into our confidence right from the beginning. There was, unfortunately, due to certain agitation largely conducted by people coming from outside the Tribal areas and the Frontier Province....<sup>3</sup>

x

x

x

Sir, I wanted to tell the House exactly where matters stand. I want to oppose the motion, because there is no urgency about it. There is no question of anything happening—something happened a month ago. I should like to take the House into my confidence if you will permit me. Otherwise, I merely oppose the motion.

1. Debate on adjournment motion, 3 February 1947 *Legislative Assembly Debates, Official Report*, Vol I, 1947, 3 February 1947–18 February 1947, pp 55–57. Nehru's speeches are given in full and the rest of the proceedings have been summarised
2. Sardar Mangal Singh's motion demanded discussion on the Government's failure to prevent attacks by the tribesmen on the people of Hazara district. Siddiq Ali Khan's motion demanded discussion of the punitive fine and the practice of taking hostages
3. Sardar Mangal Singh interrupted and asked whether Nehru was making a speech on the motion or wanted a discussion on it.

x

x

x

JN: Many of the facts that the Honourable Member has stated are perfectly correct but I should like the Honourable Member to bear in mind that this kind of thing is not new, although certain new factors came in.<sup>4</sup> It is a very difficult matter to deal with these situations, more especially because a certain policy has been followed and it is not easy to change that policy completely and suddenly. I do not think it is correct to say that the various incidents to which the Honourable Member has referred necessarily indicated that there would be a raid. Such incidents are continually happening. There was this raid. It was not on a very big scale but it had disastrous consequences undoubtedly, in that it resulted in killing, looting and burning of property. It lasted for a fairly short time. I cannot exactly state the period. May be the whole thing was over in two or three days' time Immediately steps were taken. I do not think it is possible to say that the steps subsequently taken were either delayed or inefficient. It may be that if a different policy, a long-term policy, had been acted upon, such things might not have happened but this might equally be said about many other things happening in India. We are the inheritors of past policies, of past legacies and some of them are of such a nature that we cannot change them suddenly. That is why we want independence for this country, so that we may be able to change them quickly and completely....

We had a choice in this matter as to whether we should immediately bomb these territories from the air or not. After very grave consideration, naturally, we were entirely opposed to bombing and we decided that we should not take this step. Our decision was justified by subsequent events because, in effect, the other steps we took had the immediate effect of stopping the trouble. We sent armed forces there and various terms were announced When the armed forces collected there, the tribes submitted to the terms imposed upon them The terms were more or less lenient, although one of the adjournment motions refers to them as barbarous terms. The terms imposed upon them were a cash fine of Rs. 75,000, a fine of 75 rifles and the surrender of 40 hostages. Now this business of taking hostages and keeping them is certainly not a very desirable one I may, however, draw the attention of the House to what is happening in the Tribal areas in regard to these raids That is also extremely barbarous and medieval and we have to meet that barbarousness somehow and it is for this House to decide. No

<sup>4</sup> Sardar Mangal Singh narrated some of the latest incidents on the Frontier which showed the temper of the Frontier people

Government can tolerate raids, murders, kidnappings and the like. We ought, no doubt, to root out the cause of these things but if such things occur, they have to be met with the greatest force necessary for the occasion. It is for the House to decide whether it is better to meet them by air bombing or by armed force. ....

I am perfectly prepared to discuss it if the subject comes up in the form of a resolution or otherwise. I do not see how it arises on a motion for adjournment. Nothing is happening at the moment and nothing has happened in the last month.<sup>5</sup>

5 The President disallowed Sardar Mangal Singh's motion for adjournment.

## 2. Justification of Policy on Tribal Raids<sup>1</sup>

Jawaharlal Nehru (Member for External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations): If you want me to speak I will speak. I wanted to say something right at the commencement, but then other members caught the eye of the Chair .Sir, of the adjournment motions that come before the House from time to time I venture to say that there has been none with such little justification as this one.<sup>2</sup> In fact, if I may confess it, it was the amazing lack of justification in this motion which made me ask the President to give the House time to listen to what can be put forward for a resolution which seems to me to lack substance of every kind. I was anxious also that this matter be debated in this House because there has been so much said and so much is being said directly or obliquely or by insinuation about various things happening in the Frontier that a debate here would probably not only enlighten the House but the country. So far as I am concerned or so far as the Government is concerned inevitably we would have to follow the policy which was commendable to this House and the country We have no other alternative before us. If a policy suggested by us does not commend itself to the House, we have to change that policy or we have to resign. Therefore, I am glad of this opportunity because we will be able to know at least the temper of the House in regard to such matters I

1. Debate on adjournment motion, 5 February 1947. *Legislative Assembly Debates, Official Report*, Vol 1, 1947, 3 February 1947—18 February 1947, pp 158-162

2. Nehru was speaking on Siddiq Ali Khan's motion

have no doubt that on future occasions we may have to come up before the House for more guidance and directives as to how we should proceed about the general policy, which we may pursue.

I am glad that the Honourable Mover of this motion has said that there is nothing communal about this.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, there is on this subject, though not on this motion, a great deal of communal passion and communal criticism. There is, if I may say so, a great deal of misuse of language. The subject is worthy of discussion, but I do submit to this House that the language of this motion itself and the language that the Honourable Mover used about barbarous inhumanities etc., is a complete misuse of language or ignorance of language. Some of the facts have been stated and I shall state the facts still further, if necessary.

Now, there are two or three points. This motion is perhaps confined to one particular issue, which is inevitably mixed up with the larger issue of policy in the Frontier. That is a big issue and I do not think I would be entitled to take up the time of the House over it even if I was prepared for it. Nothing has been a greater burden on my mind during these last five months since I have been in charge of my Department than this question of the policy to be pursued on the Frontier. I took an early opportunity to go to the Frontier. Ever since then I have thought about it. I have many ideas on the subject and some of them have been discussed among my colleagues. Ultimately we felt that in view of other developments elsewhere in the Constituent Assembly and in the Advisory Council, which is particularly meant, among other things, to deal with Tribal areas, it would perhaps not be desirable for a new policy to be initiated from the External Affairs Department. So, for this reason as well as for other reasons we did not attempt to initiate that new policy though at the same time inevitably we tried to give a new orientation to such policies as were being pursued. There were other difficulties, of course, because our problem, whether it is a Frontier problem or any other problem, is connected and is affected by various developments in India. This very instance about which this motion has been brought was in a sense a reflection of something that happened elsewhere in India. And we thought that because of this close connection with all India events, it could not be wholly isolated from them and it had to be taken together. Perhaps an attempt to hasten a change there without due consideration of an all India problem may not yield results or might yield wrong results. In other matters, undoubtedly, as Member in charge of the External Affairs Department, I am fully

<sup>3</sup> Siddiq Ali Khan had said that there was nothing communal about the motion as the victims of the raids made from across the border included Muslims as well as Hindus.

responsible for anything that may happen in the Frontier in regard to this Department. I do not for an instant deny any responsibility or disclaim it. Nevertheless, the House knows well that any head of the Department has got the machinery and apparatus which he inherits, he cannot function just as he wills unless that machinery and apparatus are changed. Now, Sir, the Frontier machinery and apparatus have been trained in a particular way for over 100 years. It is not so much the question of the present personnel. The personnel there for years past have been trained in a particular way. It is a way with which I have little sympathy and naturally because that policy was laid down long ago with different objectives and today, with an entirely different approach, few people can have sympathy with that policy. I do not propose to argue whether that policy in the past succeeded or failed. But I would certainly submit that it is totally out of keeping with the present day. And so, it was a peculiar question, a big question before us, how far with this present machinery and apparatus of government in the Frontier Province, trained in this past policy, we can use them, how far we can initiate new policies without some other changes also. So, for these reasons we decided not to put forward any radically new policy for the moment, but wait rather for the Advisory Council and the Constituent Assembly to consider these matters. But if, however, occasion arises and some day this policy is to be considered, the House may take it that it will be placed before it for consideration before any vital change is made.

Now, Sir, coming to this particular matter, it is obvious that no Government can tolerate wanton outrages, murder, raid, arson, etc. No Government can refuse protection to its people when they are attacked and no Government is worth the name if it is incapable of giving that protection. It is an obvious statement with which the Honourable Mover himself agreed<sup>4</sup>. Yet, unfortunately for us, we see today in various parts of India that in spite of every effort outrages have been committed, are being committed. My Honourable friend Sardar Mangal Singh talked about preventive action. Quite rightly he is justified in drawing attention to that fact. It is quite possible—I cannot definitely say—that something that might have been done might have prevented something that happened after. We can always be wise after the event, but all over India some kind of preventive action is necessary. If we forget the yesterdays, we have the tomorrows to look after. We are

<sup>4</sup> Siddiq Ali Khan had said he was not opposed to the idea of protecting the life and property of the people but protested against the ignorance of the External Affairs Department about the causes of the raids and the severe punishment imposed upon the tribes.

thinking of that, we are trying to do it, but owing to certain unfortunate happenings, a certain atmosphere has arisen which enables these things to happen and which encourages them. We have to face that No doubt this House and the country will face it and put an end to it. But for the moment, I should like this Honourable House and the Honourable Member Sardar Mangal Singh to remember, when he asks us about this preventive action, this context in which this thing has occurred when such things or similar things have happened in many parts of India. If we failed in other parts of India, if somebody failed in other parts of India, it is perhaps understandable why we failed in the Frontier Province for a little while.

Well, Sir, what happened there in so far as this border raid is concerned? On the 7th and 8th December, 1946, a large body of trans-border tribesmen raided the villages of Battal and Oghi. During that raid two market places were burnt down, 15 Hindus and two Muslims were killed, bazaars were burnt and looted. There were other petty outrages in the district. On the next day or two days after, a lorry-load of Hindus mainly women and children, who were trying to escape, were stopped and there was a general massacre of the occupants of that lorry. Fourteen were killed, chiefly women and children, and 27 were wounded.

Now, Sir, practically speaking these are the main incidents which happened in connection with this border raid. I have to meet two arguments, firstly that we were slow and lenient, and secondly that we were barbarous and medieval. The two really cancel each other. I put it to the House, I will give the facts to the House and leave the House to judge them. Immediately this happened, within a day or two of it, we were seized of the facts, we gave very earnest consideration to various proposals that were put before us from those in authority in the Frontier over these Tribal areas. The proposals were that we should bomb these territories from the air. The House knows that we have been averse to bombing, we are averse to bombing. Powerful arguments were adduced that this was the safest course, the humanest and the quickest way of putting an end to the problem. We were told that there was danger that if we did not put an end to this, it might spread, it might affect other Tribal territories round about. We were told that the settled areas also were in danger. It was a very difficult proposition for us because we took the responsibility of the danger of this trouble spreading. On the other hand we were totally averse to this bombing business. I must confess that I spent a very difficult day and very difficult two nights thinking over this problem and consulting others. I came to the conclusion for a variety of reasons that we should

not bomb In the meanwhile we had been waiting for further news about the developments in the Hazara district and this further news confirmed us in our conclusion. It has been suggested by Sardar Mangal Singh that we did not do anything for three weeks till January.<sup>5</sup> Well, Sir, that is not correct. At that time we decided straightaway two things. First, of course that the Frontier constabulary should immediately go there and protect the citizens. Those who were easily available were there within a day or two and they did protect In fact in one or two places they came into conflict with the raiders But the bigger operation necessitated troops being collected there. It was decided to send a brigade immediately. But we were informed by the military that it would take some days, it would take about a fortnight before a full brigade could be gathered there. Meanwhile, of course, the House will remember that the armed constabulary and others were protecting the people ..

So that while the Frontier constabulary was holding the fort—if I may say so—protecting the people, the brigade was gathering there and it did gather there. When the brigade was there early in January these terms were announced, because there was no point in terms being announced until there was nobody to enforce them. The terms, as the House has already heard, were a fine of Rs 75,000, 75 rifles and 40 hostages. I need not say much about the money part or the rifles, it was undoubtedly lenient. So far as the question of hostages is concerned, it sounds awful, and the Honourable Mover of this motion asked us if we are going to behead the hostages and the rest of it.<sup>6</sup> As a matter of fact the House will remember that many of these tribesmen are continually taking hostages from us. It is a daily practice and a frequent practice Every person kidnapped is a hostage held up for ransom and sometimes comes to a worse end. Now the real question before us is how we are to face this contingency and stop this, and I shall be very glad if any Honourable Member would help us in finding a solution This taking of hostages means keeping certain persons handed over more or less as detenus—not in prison but under some restraint—till the terms are fulfilled and till there is an assurance that no further trouble will occur It is unfortunately a custom which has been prevailing there for some time past in the Frontier areas Whether I liked it or not, I did not myself feel justified in coming in the way of

5. Sardar Mangal Singh had narrated the incidents of raids beginning from 7 December 1946 and said that troops were sent only on 3 January 1947

6. Siddiq Ali Khan had asked what was the purpose of taking hostages Did it mean that if the tribes committed another raid on British Indian territory those hostages who had done nothing would be beheaded by the External Affairs Department?

the local authorities who have been functioning in that way, and telling them that they must not do this, without being able to give them an alternative. But I prevented them—not I of course but Government prevented them—from indulging in air operations.

If I went on to tell them not to do this or that who was going to be responsible for the safety of the people or the prevention of any further disorder? It sounds awful but I do not think that keeping 40 or 50 or 60 men under restraint is so awful. The House will remember that thousands have been kept under restraint in various parts of India; it is not a measure of barbarity or anything. I do not like it to happen but it really means that certain persons who have misbehaved are kept in detention for a while. So that I do submit that there is nothing in it. We could not have done it previously, perhaps we might; I do not know; but what we did has in effect been justified by events and nothing further has happened. We have to find a balance between two factors; one is that we must make the evil-doers feel that they have done wrong and we must prevent them from continuing it and they must see that if they persist in it they will be punished. The second is, not to go so far as to make them feel humiliated and revengeful so that they may revert to their evil-doing afterwards. That balance is a difficult balance, but I think in this particular matter we did succeed in arriving at that balance and found some kind of middle way avoiding either extreme. And you can judge from this that since the first two or three days of these raids when a number of murders and looting occurred nothing further has occurred; we could keep them in check, whether with the constabulary or the armed forces. Secondly, when these terms, which are supposed to be terrible, were announced, they were accepted very soon. It was not necessary for our armed forces to enter the Tribal territory, before they entered it they were accepted and part payment was made immediately. I do not know if complete payment has yet been made. But about three-fourths of the payment was made, rifles were given, most of the hostages were given; and the leading Maliks of that area accepted those terms and promised good behaviour. So that such a terrible incident ended in relatively less ill feeling than it might have done; and, as one Honourable Member said, the people who had run away from their homes are returning to their homes. That too is a sign of how soon we are trying to go back to normal conditions

I do submit that in those conditions Government, whatever their many failings might be, have succeeded remarkably in dealing with this particular situation; and I do submit further that this motion which condemns Government for their barbarity has absolutely no justification

whatever. There is no question of barbarity, we dealt with the situation with extreme leniency and justice

### 3. Need for a New Policy on the Frontier<sup>1</sup>

Sir, I am reluctant to intervene in this debate on financial matters but my friend, the Honourable Member who comes from the Frontier, referred to the Tribal areas and severely criticised much that has happened or that is happening there<sup>2</sup>. I would normally welcome a full discussion in this House about Tribal areas in the North Western Frontier or the North East Frontier of India because it is a very important area from many points of view and on it depend many factors with regard to our policy. For the moment, however, I would just like to say a few words.

May I first of all say that I regret very much the immoderate language that the Honourable Member used? There is a very great deal in the Frontier which is open to criticism, which has been open and is still open to criticism. But if we start settling any problem in terms of individuals and personalities we are apt to lose sight of the principles involved. It is quite easy, and sometimes right, to criticise the individuals and personalities concerned. But it does not help really considering the main problem. I suppose if we went into the question of individuals, highly placed or low, in government service or in other services we will be able to find many who might well be replaced by better men or need not be replaced at all. But the problem of the Frontier is something bigger than that of the individuals. It is a problem created largely by British policy in the last hundred years or so. I do not now propose to go into the merits of that policy; it is a big question and there have been various schools of thought in regard to it. Possibly one may say that it succeeded in a measure. In another way it did not succeed. But the point is what was the aim of the British policy in India in the Frontier, because unless you know what the object of the policy was

1. Speech while intervening in the debate on the Indian Finance Bill in the Central Legislative Assembly on 27 March 1947 *Legislative Assembly Debates, Official Report*, Vol IV, 1947, pp 2555-2568

2. On 25 March 1947, Abdul Ghani Khan charged the Political Department with buying "influence in the tribal territory with Indian gold" for its own benefit and held that before any new policy was introduced, it was essential to "change the tools of the old policy from top to bottom". He particularly demanded the removal of the Governor of N.W.F.P and the political agents in Malakand, Khyber, Khurram and Waziristan

you cannot say whether it succeeded or did not succeed. I imagine from the point of view of the objective of British policy it largely succeeded But that particular objective seems to me something entirely different from the kind of objective that we should have in the Frontier. Therefore, quite apart from the merits or the failure or success of that policy in the past, we have to review it completely in the light of new objectives that we may lay down What are those objectives? How does the Frontier area concern us? It will, obviously, first of all because we are concerned with the well-being of the people in every part of India, secondly because the Frontier areas are important defence areas and therefore we cannot treat them just as any other area; thirdly because in these Frontier areas of the North West various things have been happening for a large number of years which have sometimes necessitated military operations and other measures to curtail the raids or activities of some Tribesmen. The House knows that those areas have been bombed. The House knows that there has been a long series of kidnappings, raids etc , in the past and sometimes it has continued in recent months for weeks, and as a consequence there have been military operations, either bombing from the air or other military operations. Now, obviously this in itself shows that there was something about the policy which continually depends on such military operations. You may have or you may not have air bombing. But some kind of military operations become essential if there are raids, if there is kidnapping, if there is general insecurity, because no government can put up with this kind of insecurity and the kidnapping and forcible removal of peaceful citizens One has to meet that menace.

The Honourable Member pointed out that this is due to the fact that these people are poor, they have no gainful activities and therefore they have to make a living this way by kidnapping for ransom, etc. That may be considered as an economic problem as it is indeed to a large extent. Nevertheless one factor is perfectly clear namely that however we tackle the problem—and we should tackle it in a way to remove the root causes of it—we cannot tolerate any raids, kidnappings or any other violent incursions into settled territories. I am not at present going to lay down any policy that we are going to pursue because, frankly speaking, my own mind is not completely clear about it; also because this matter is being considered, or rather will be considered, in other places, by the Advisory Committee appointed by the Constituent Assembly. Because of that some steps that we might possibly have taken in further consideration of this problem have not been taken as we could not easily overlap in this manner But let us see what are the main aspects of the problem. We do not wish to interfere

in any way in regard to the life of these Tribal areas, that is to say, we do not wish to impose anything against their will. We want to leave them as free as possible to lead their own life as they like. At the same time we do not want them to interfere with the lives of others adjoining those areas. We cannot tolerate any incursions, any upsetting of the lives of others. We have to find an equilibrium between the two, and we have to look at this in the larger context of defence. Of course, we should like, and we want to help them in every way, to raise their standard of living, to raise their economic status and to give them employment and various types of industries—cottage industries or whatever it may be—so that one of the motives which impels them to raid and kidnap will be removed, because I do not think the right way to deal with this problem is just by military means or pressure or punishment. The payment of what is tantamount to hush money has also been tried and that has succeeded for the moment. Fairly large sums of money have been spent in the Frontier on this account. I do not grudge the spending of that money in the Frontier. Indeed I should like more money to be spent there. But I do grudge to spend the money in the way it has been spent, which brings no results, no ultimate results in the improvement of the people, which just for the moment keeps them quiet. I think that money, and even larger sums of money, ought to be employed in effecting some radical change and in improving these areas economically, educationally and otherwise. That will be a fundamental improvement which will deal with the causes of all this trouble that we have had. How we are to do that and in what manner is not very easy to say immediately but I have no doubt that it can be done. It becomes ultimately rather a long distance programme, not a problem which can be tackled immediately. However, undoubtedly, we have to do it and we are going to do it in that way. Again we have got to do it in a manner which does not appear to be an imposition from above, but which is largely in cooperation and with the goodwill of the people concerned, because it appears to me that if it is an imposition from above, it will fail to a large extent.

Various other matters come up for consideration in the Frontier as elsewhere. There are various classes of people there and we are apt to think that they are all of one kind. But there are classes there undoubtedly and in a sense, in a vague sense, one might say there is a measure of feudalism there too. There are the Tribal chiefs, there are their followers and it does not follow that what is to the advantage of some of the upper class Tribal chiefs is to the advantage of a large number of other people there. I believe that there is a certain class conflict developed to some extent there. Now, I do not want that class conflict to

grow. I am simply analysing the situation In the past the Government of India has largely dealt with these Tribal chiefs either by paying them some form of subsidy or otherwise and thus enhanced the prestige of these Tribal chiefs, whom they chose to honour and pay, and through them has controlled the others How far even that is a practicable proposition in the future I do not know. I rather doubt it. In any event I think the time has come, in the Frontier and elsewhere, when we should not think in terms of the Tribal chiefs or the upper chiefs but rather of the common man, of the masses there and any policy that is evolved should take into consideration the raising of the mass level. If that is done, you deal with the situation in a radical and a more or less permanent way.

Personally I feel that the present set-up in the Frontier, the whole policy pursued as well as the administrative set-up is completely out of date I think the arrangement there, under which many officers have a dual allegiance, is bad As the House might know, very often, an officer, say the Deputy Commissioner, is responsible to the Provincial Government for his particular area in the province but for a part of the Tribal areas he is not responsible to the Provincial Government. He is responsible to the Governor who is in charge of the Tribal areas. This kind of dual responsibility has given rise to a great deal of trouble and it is illogical and unreasonable. Some way will have to be found to end it Also, we blame sometimes rightly, sometimes wrongly, the officers there but we have to bear in mind that they have been trained to follow a certain policy. Now, that policy, whether it was right or wrong in the past, is not suited to present-day conditions It cannot be. We cannot, Free India cannot, think of the Frontier in the same terms as the British Government in the past It simply cannot be done, whether we like it or not We have to approach them in a friendly, in a cooperative, way. If there is trouble, we have to put it down with a strong hand but nevertheless our whole approach is to be friendly and cooperative and not based on hush money and the like but rather on spending money in removing the economic difficulties and improving their standards. Therefore the present set-up in the Frontier which has come into existence because of following that class policy does not fit in today at all. Many individual officers who are quite good in their individual ways and have carried out the old policy properly may not fit in when you change that whole policy, because they have been working too much in the ruts of that old policy and the whole question has to be considered as to how to introduce the new policy and change the present set-up so as to fit in with that new policy We have to consider it. I hope that the House will at some time or other consider it and give us the benefit of

their advice on the matter. And as I said, concurrently the Constituent Assembly has appointed an Advisory Committee for the Tribal areas to go into this matter. That Advisory Committee is not, so far as I understand, going to take up this matter in near future, that is, in the next month or two. They will probably study the problem first and after two months, may be a little longer, they may desire to go there, merely in an exploratory way, meet the people there, discuss the matter with them and then possibly report. So, for the present, all I can say is this that we welcome the House taking an interest in this subject by way of questions and otherwise. I myself do not see what other big changes we can suddenly introduce at this moment, although big changes are necessary.

#### **4. Air Action to be Decided on Merits<sup>1</sup>**

The Honourable Member for External Affairs said that the telegram received from the Governor, N.W.F.P., indicated that there was the possibility of the tribesmen moving into the settled areas and it was necessary therefore to take steps in time to stop such movements. If that were not done and raids materialised, it would be difficult to suppress the trouble before a great deal of damage was done. As was realised in the Hazara District incident,<sup>2</sup> which was of a relatively small nature, it would take land forces very much more time to be effective. Unless we could suggest an effective alternative method of controlling threatened trouble it would clearly be wrong on our part to turn down such a request. Obviously it was desirable to scotch the trouble right at the outset. He had stated in the Assembly and elsewhere, as also had several of his colleagues, in emphatic terms that they were averse to bombing villages from the air. Soon after the Interim Government came into power, the question of air bombing came up. The immediate issue then was that air bombing had been used for recovering fines that

1. Extracts from the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 2 April 1947  
Lord Mountbatten Papers, Broadlands Archives Trust, Broadlands, Romsey Hampshire.

2 According to a communique issued by the N.W.F.P. government on 11 March 1947, one person had been killed and two places of worship burnt in Hazara district.

had been imposed on tribesmen held to be responsible for the kidnapping of some of our officers. There was no decision of the Cabinet imposing general and total prohibition of the use of air action. In the case of the Hazara District disturbances the question was discussed on its merits and the decision taken then was that land forces should be used to meet the situation. In this case also the question must be examined on its merits<sup>3</sup>

3 Summing up the discussion, Mountbatten said that the majority was clearly in favour of air action under certain circumstances but the power to authorise it should be retained by the Central Government

## 5. Evacuation of Parachinar<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Awtar Singh of Parachinar of Kurram Agency saw me today on behalf of about 1000 Hindu and Sikh residents of Parachinar. He states that they are in very great danger and that immediate arrangements should be made for having them shifted to the Punjab.

2 On the 14th March a mob of 25000 tribesmen was moving towards the town. The mob was still 14 miles away when the Political Agent (Major Leeper)<sup>2</sup> was approached for assistance. The Political Agent expressed his helplessness. A deputation from the town met the mob which was led by the Mullah of Manki at a distance of 2 miles from the town and there signed a statement to the effect that they accepted Pakistan and the Muslim League. They also paid a sum of Rs 75000 to the Mullah

3 In order to bring this message to Delhi Dr. Awtar Singh travelled in a purdah car of Khan Bahadur Shah Sayed, a local Pir, to whom a sum of Rs 5000 was paid for this purpose. Dr. Awtar Singh does not propose to go back there, but is prepared, if required, to do so. He considers that without military escort the evacuation of the population of Parachinar cannot be undertaken.

1 Note, 5 April 1947 J N Papers, N M M L

2 William Cluff Leeper, joined Indian Political Service and served in various posts in N.W.F.P., Political Agent, Parachinar, Kurram Agency, from October 1946

## 6. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
23rd April 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

Thank you for your letter of the 21st April.<sup>2</sup> I quite agree with you that it would be desirable for you to keep yourself informed of happenings in the Tribal areas. I have been reluctant to add to your burdens, because you have been terribly busy I am asking my Department to communicate to you anything of importance relating to the Tribal areas

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N Collection

2 He had asked Nehru to instruct the External Affairs Department that the cases about the Tribal areas sent to the Viceroy should be sufficient enough to keep him continuously in the picture

## 7. Mountbatten's Record of Interview with Nehru<sup>1</sup>

I discussed with him the question of the lumpsum grant of one year's allowances and one month's Khassadari pay to be given to the Afridis in recognition of their special services during the war.

Pandit Nehru said he was opposed to giving a cash reward, and if the money had to be given at all he would prefer it to be spent on behalf of the Afridis in the form of scholarships or endowed for an Afriti hostel in the Islamia College, Peshawar. He said that this proposal had been accepted in principle by the Finance Department, but that he himself did not wish to take any further action until the situation in the N.W.F. Province was a bit more clear.

I said I really could not accept any further delay, since Lord Wavell had virtually promised this money,<sup>2</sup> and that I now proposed to write to the Governor informing him that the money would be forthcoming

1. 5 May 1947. Lord Mountbatten Papers, Broadlands Archives Trust, Broadlands, Romsey, Hampshire

2 The tribesmen of the Khyber Agency were granted Rs 25,000 for the education of boys by Wavell.

in the form of a credit from the Central Government for the advancement of education among the Afridis, and that he was to consult them as to the manner in which it was to be spent. I said that before sending out the letter I would show it to Pandit Nehru, probably when he came up to Simla.

With regard to the Rs 5,000 fine levied on the Afridis,<sup>3</sup> I told him that I was against remission, but in favour of this sum being spent for the relief of Mussalmans in Bihar. He agreed that this was a worthy object, and I told him that I would draft a letter on this subject and would show this also to him in Simla.

We discussed a note for Cabinet on the terms of reference of the Economy Committee which had been submitted by the Finance Member. I told him that I had held this up until I could get his views. He said that he considered an Economy Committee absolutely essential but admitted that this might not be the best moment to set it up, since anyone with expert knowledge of finance would be needed to serve on committees to examine the problem e.g. of dividing up assets and liabilities in the event of partition.

I told him I would speak to the Finance Member next time I saw him, suggesting that this might be postponed; but he said that if the Finance Member particularly wished it brought forward, he would raise no objection.

I next went with Pandit Nehru through Sardar Patel's letter of the 26th April,<sup>4</sup> on the interpretation of H.M.G.'s statement of the 6th December. I pointed out that the Cabinet Mission plan still held the field so far as H.M.G. were concerned, and that I proposed to make one more attempt to get it accepted at the meeting with the leaders. I therefore thought it would be well to clear up the point as to whether Congress really did accept H.M.G.'s statement of the 6th December and were prepared to abide by it or not.

Pandit Nehru replied that of course the Congress accepted the statement, but if they were to be asked whether they were going to force Assam and the Sikhs to abide by it they would have to admit that they were in no position to force any province or section of a province to

3 The fine was imposed on account of the stoning and obstruction by the tribesmen near Landi Kotal during Nehru's visit in October 1946.

4 Patel had written that the AICC resolution of 6 January 1947 was compatible with the intentions of the British Government's statement of 6 December 1946. He referred to Wavell's letter dated 15 June 1946 to Maulana Azad, and to the speeches of Cripps, Pethick-Lawrence and A.V. Alexander in Parliament, admitting that the Cabinet Mission's plan did not make grouping compulsory.

comply with all the terms against their will and interest. All Congress could do was to advise them to the best of their ability and try to persuade them to abide by the statement. "In other words", he said, "the League must be realistic and must realise that if they attempt to cheat or repress any non-Muslim community within Groups B and C, they are bound to have trouble as a matter of normal human reaction."

I admitted that this was a sensible point of view, but said that it was not likely to make acceptance of the Cabinet Mission plan easier for Mr. Jinnah.

## INDIA AND WORLD AFFAIRS

## I. Foreign Policy

## 1. Scope and Functions of the Standing Committee<sup>1</sup>

I do not think any question of approximating to the American model arises.<sup>2</sup> But if members of the Standing Committee desire to discuss matters connected with foreign policy generally, they should do so.<sup>3</sup> This does not mean enlarging the functions of the committee but treating it with a certain latitude. I agree generally with the notes above.

1. Note, 3 February 1947. Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, File No 53(10)-G/47, pp 1-4/notes, National Archives of India.
- 2 A Standing Committee of the Central Assembly was being set up to advise on Baluchistan Tribal Affairs and India's membership of U.N.O In his note of 31 January 1947, H Trevelyan mentioned that in the United States there was a Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate whereas in the United Kingdom foreign policy was formulated by the Government and said that the position to which India must look forward "will presumably approximate more in this respect to the United Kingdom than to the United States"
- 3 H Trevelyan was also of the view that the Government should avoid any extension of the subjects to be brought before the Standing Committee

## 2. *Delhi-Chungking*<sup>1</sup>

For some months now I have hardly read a book. My time is spent in other activities which many people consider important but which certainly are not always pleasant or entertaining. However important these activities might be, I have had to pay a heavy price for them by parting company with books for a while. Regretfully I look at shelves filled with books; sometimes I take out a book and handle it with affection and then put it back again; and then I go back to the dull business of official files and the duller business of interviews. It is a continuous race with time, with time always the winner.

1. New Delhi, 6 February 1947. Foreword to K P S Menon, *Delhi-Chungking* (London, 1947).

When K.P.S. Menon asked me to write a foreword to his book, I was a little taken aback, and then when he presented me with long galley proofs of this book, which were by no means easy to handle or read, I marvelled at his optimism. And yet I found myself looking into these galley proofs and reading many passages when a wiser man would have sought sleep.

It is good to travel, but if travel is denied then the next best thing is to read books on travel. What more wonderful journey there can be than to follow the old caravan routes right across Asia or from India to China via Turkistan and Sinkiang? I am filled with regret when I think that perhaps I shall never have the time or the opportunity to undertake these long, arduous and yet leisurely journeys. For many years I have gazed at the map of Asia and traced these routes traversed by famous travellers. I have read many books about these travels and sought to satisfy thereby my own wanderlust. Asia fascinates me, the long past of Asia, the achievements of Asia through millennia of history, the troubled present of Asia, and the future that is taking shape almost before our eyes. Perhaps if I actually visit many of the places in Asia, about which I have read so much, I would be disappointed, for the old glory has departed and often where a proud culture flourished only a backward desert now remains. It is more satisfying to see ruins which the imagination can fill as it chooses.

I have liked reading K.P.S. Menon's book because it makes good reading and it reminds me of so many of my own fantasies and dreams of long ago. I envy him this journey, but at the same time I am grateful to him for sharing somewhat the experience and excitement of the journey with me. Perhaps before long such journeys will be things of the past with so-called modern progress. It is well, therefore, that we have authentic records of them which will tell people of a later age the experience which are beyond their reach. We have a noble band of adventurous writers from Hiuen-tsang and Marco Polo to Sven Hedin, Aurel Stein<sup>2</sup> and Peter Fleming<sup>3</sup>. K.P.S. Menon has joined that company. I hope that many will enjoy the reading of his book as I

2. Mark Aurel Stein (1862-1943), British archaeologist who conducted explorations in Chinese Turkestan, Central Asia, West China, Persia, upper Swat, Baluchistan, Makran, south Persia, western Iran and Iraq and Trans-Jordan etc., author of several books including *Chronicle of Kings of Kashmir* (1900), *The Thousand Buddhas* (1921), *Innermost Asia* (1928) and *On Alexander's Track to the Indus* (1929).
3. (1907-1971), British journalist and novelist, worked on the staff of the *Evening Standard*, *The Spectator* and *The Times*, author of several books including *Brazilian Adventure* (1933), *News from Tartary* (1936), *The Flying Visit* (1940), *The Siege at Peking* (1959) and *Bayonets to Lhasa* (1961).

have done, and that this will lead them to a greater understanding of the past and the present of Asia.

### 3. To V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
9 February 1947

My dear Krishna,

I have received a number of letters from you through Vellodi—five to be exact, all dated 1st February and a later one. This is meant to be rather a brief reply for I can find little time just at present for a longer one.

2. I have noted what you say about the student problem in London.<sup>2</sup> There is no question of appointing a public or private commission to inquire, but the matter has to be attended to.
3. The youth delegation is due to arrive here today.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately the youth organizations here are quarrelling about it. It is difficult to do much for them officially except to give them normal facilities
4. About Italy I shall write to you officially later.<sup>4</sup>

1. V K Krishna Menon Papers, N M M L

2. In his letter of 1 February 1947, Krishna Menon wrote that, while there were problems of admission and accommodation, the agitation by some Indian students was "part of a general attack on the Congress." He also disapproved of the demand of a student body to set up a public commission to enquire into their grievances.

3. The Youth Commission of the World Federation of Democratic Youth, consisting of representatives from the Soviet Union, France, Yugoslavia and Denmark, arrived in Delhi on 9 February 1947 to study problems of the Indian youth

4. Krishna Menon wished to know whether he should return the call of the representative of the Italian Government in London, who had said that his Government favoured the establishment of diplomatic relations with India. See also *post*, section II(IV), item 5.

5. Your letter about the Asian Conference<sup>5</sup> is being sent on to their secretariat here.

6 Your very personal letter requires a fuller reply than I can give it at present. But I want to assure you that your distress is unjustified except insofar as many things that happen distress us all. Our judgements and actions are conditioned and limited by a variety of circumstances so that apart from our initial inclination we are affected by many other factors I have repeatedly hinted to you that I cannot function as I would like to because of things happening here. In some matters my judgement may not be the same as yours because of these other factors I do not think they have made any difference either to my affection for or my confidence in you, and you need not worry about that What I am sorry about is that I am not in a position at present fully to utilize your great experience and ability as I would like to. Things are changing here all the time and one does not know exactly where one stands

7. You know that if any person is at all outstanding he comes up against the jealousy and stupidity of others We have all had to put up with them, for unfortunately most people are rather stupid and narrow-minded. But I do not think that this should affect your work or mine very much in the long run. We are passing through a difficult phase. Don't allow this to distress you too much or to lead you to any kind of action which may have unfortunate consequences in regard to our work. You will inevitably have to shoulder responsibilities. We have few enough people who can do that. Even apart from personal reasons, therefore, I would not like you to feel that anything special has happened which may come in the way of responsible work

8 The Muslim League Resolution has inevitably led to an internal crisis in the Interim Government<sup>6</sup> There must be a decision this way or that fairly soon Meanwhile we are having a difficult time with the States Rulers

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

5. Krishna Menon had informed Nehru that various political parties had responded favourably to the proposed Asian Relations Conference

6 The Working Committee of the Muslim League, by its resolution of 31 January 1947, refused to reconsider its decision withdrawing acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's plan of 16 May 1946 It alleged that the Congress had reduced the Constituent Assembly to a rump and something totally different from what the Cabinet Mission had had in mind

#### 4. India's Peaceful Foreign Policy<sup>1</sup>

Thank you for invitation for message to *New Republic*<sup>2</sup> Our first ambassador carries with him India's greetings and good wishes to people of United States He will endeavour to develop closer relations between the two countries. Our policy is based on United Nations Charter and cooperation of all nations for peace, freedom and liberation of all suppressed peoples. We propose to avoid entanglement in any blocs or groups of Powers realising that only thus can we serve not only cause of India but of world peace This policy sometimes leads partisans of one group to imagine that we are supporting the other group Every nation places its own interests first in developing its foreign policy Fortunately India's interests coincide with peaceful foreign policy and cooperation with all other progressive nations Inevitably India will be drawn closer to those countries which are friendly and cooperative to her.

On eve of independence India looks forward in spite of her present troubles with confidence to rapid progress and to utilising her vast resources for betterment of her people and development as a great nation She is bound to play increasing part in world affairs and all her weight will be thrown on the side of peace and social progress In present context of international rivalries and suspicion it is difficult to maintain a balance and not be swept away by fear or dislike Those who try to do so are apt to be misunderstood but that is the only correct policy which can lead out of the vicious circle in which the world moves today. That is the policy which India intends to pursue in foreign affairs and she hopes that all those who stand for this policy in America and elsewhere will cooperate for common ends and not be disheartened by momentary setbacks or imputation of motives In a world where there are still so many bloodshot eyes we have to be clear-eyed and while being practical must also keep our ideals in view.

1 Message to *New Republic* (New York) sent from New Delhi, 10 February 1947 Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, File No 470-FEA/47, pp 18-19/c, National Archives of India

2 Henry Wallace, former Vice-President of the United States and now editor of the *New Republic*, had cabled Nehru on 4 February 1947 asking him for a message on the occasion of the arrival of the first Indian ambassador in Washington The message should analyze the "present political situation in India" and suggest ways in which American and Indian "progressives" could work for common ends

## 5. Visas for Foreigners<sup>1</sup>

On several occasions recently my attention has been drawn to the great delay in the issue of visas to foreigners coming to India or passing through India. This has specially happened in Iran and China. As a consequence there is considerable irritation in both these countries, and Iran is retaliating by holding up visas to Indians wishing to go to Iran. This is causing not only great inconvenience but loss to Indian merchants and others.

2 I would suggest to E.A.D and Home Department to consider this matter and to evolve some procedure which would enable visas to be granted with rapidity. It is unbecoming, unbusinesslike and not in consonance with the dignity of the Government of India to take a long time over such trivial matters. It is these small things, even more than the big things, that build up a nation's reputation abroad. For reasons of self-interest alone it is necessary that we should act promptly, for if we do not do so our citizens suffer.

3. I do not understand why there should be such great delay in issuing visas, and sometimes even transit visas. Chinese students coming to India have been held up for a long time. I suppose the delay is caused by numerous references to distant authorities. Some procedure should be evolved to avoid such references except in very special cases. In Europe, previous to the Second World War, thousands of people were passing to and fro, between different countries. They were granted visas at the respective Consulates without any reference being made. I do know what the practice is now. But I have little doubt that business would be at a standstill if a visa took weeks and months.

4 If it is necessary to change the rules on the subject, they should be changed. I do not know what these rules are and who is specially responsible for them. I suppose that they are the joint concern of E.A.D. and Home Department. I hope they will give their early attention to this matter.

5 In this connection I might also mention that the Registration of Foreigners' Rules are very strict and harassing. Registration is certain-

1 Note, 13 February 1947 External Affairs Department File No 202(15)-P/46 (Part-I), pp 31-32/notes, National Archives of India.

ly desirable; but frequent reporting at a police station and giving information of movements are definitely harassing I have had complaints about these rules from many people including Americans. I suppose it is quite possible to have strict rules on the subject which do not harass a foreigner.

6. Some time back I sent a note to E.A.D regarding a revision of rules regarding the control of the entry of foreigners to India as well as the issue of passports to Indians I had suggested that the E.A.D. and Home Department might confer together and revise the rules for Cabinet consideration I do not know what has happened to this. Will E.A.D. please report how the matter stands now?

## **6. Reorganisation of the External Affairs Department<sup>1</sup>**

The Honourable Member for External Affairs said that it was clearly desirable that one Department should deal with all matters relating to Indians and Indian affairs overseas. Originally, there was in fact one Department for foreign affairs. It was split up and the responsibility for Indians in Commonwealth countries was transferred from the then External Affairs Department to the Education, Health and Lands Departments in response to public demand A separate Department of Commonwealth Relations was formed only very recently in 1942 By amalgamating the two Departments, it will be possible to avoid duplication in certain respects. It was difficult to say whether that would actually result in a saving of staff. The work of the Departments was expanding and if they were amalgamated, the expansion will be on a single line instead of on parallel lines. Owing to difficulties of accommodation complete amalgamation would not be immediately feasible but every effort will be made to avoid as much overlapping as possible He was not in a position to say what the structure of the combined Department would eventually look like

In answer to Wavell, the Honourable Member for External Affairs explained that the work of the Department would partly be divided into territorial sections and partly into subjects or technical sections Thus there would be sections dealing with, say, European coun-

<sup>1</sup> Remarks at a Cabinet meeting, 19 February 1947 Cabinet Secretariat Papers

tries, American countries etc and also sections dealing with specific groups of subjects such as Treaties, International Conferences, Economic Policy etc The Honourable Member for External Affairs added that the amalgamated Department would continue to be referred to as the External Affairs Department.

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The Honourable Member for External Affairs then dealt with the second and the third proposals. He stated that a scheme for a Foreign Service was approved by the Government on the 9th October, 1946. It had been worked upon long before that date in the External Affairs Department and had been put into an agreed shape after inter-Departmental discussions. That scheme contemplated a new single cadre for all India's diplomatic, consular and commercial posts abroad, and proceeded on the assumption that the increasing importance of commerce in international relations rendered it necessary for diplomatic and commercial representation to be integrated. In pursuance of that decision his Department had been taking steps for the constitution of this new service, and in the course of the next few days in fact the Federal Public Service Commission would be inviting applications from candidates desirous of being selected for the new service.

Continuing, the Honourable Member for External Affairs stated that the post of our High Commissioner in the U.K. was included in the general scheme India now had her own representatives in the U.S.A. and the Dominions and would soon be having independent diplomatic representatives in other countries and all these were under the administrative control of the External Affairs Department and the Commonwealth Relations Department. It seemed logical to place the High Commissioner in the U.K. also under the combined Department. Again it was relevant in this connection to point out that the High Commissioner for the U.K. in India was accredited to the Government of India through the Commonwealth Relations Department. Our High Commissioner in the U.K. must occupy a corresponding position in the U.K. and if that was to be done, then it was clearly desirable that he should be under the administrative control of the combined External Affairs Department.

As regards the desirability of a unitary service, that was in fact almost universal practice today. The exceptions pointed out by the Honourable the Commerce Member related to the practice obtaining in the Dominions. The position, however, is clearly distinguishable. The Dominions began to have their own diplomatic representatives only very recently and they started their Trade Commissioners Service earlier. They were beginning to realise that unless there was integration there would be difficulties.

Continuing, the Honourable Member for External Affairs said that economics and politics in international affairs were so closely interwoven that it would be a mistake for us to have as our representative any person who was not thoroughly familiar with the economic and commercial policy of the country. That was the reason why it had been decided to lay very great emphasis on the new recruits having a satisfactory theoretical knowledge of economics and commercial practice. In the U S A., too, the training for foreign service candidates provides specifically for a thorough grounding in economic and commercial practice. The experience of our Washington embassy also brought out clearly that the bulk of work handled there related to commercial and economic matters and that was likely to be the case everywhere else. If there are to be separate services, there is bound to be duplication and that would mean waste, inefficiency and confusion. Organisationally too, it must be remembered that a smaller cadre would lead to inefficiency and dissatisfaction by not affording sufficient scope for promotion. The suggestion that the Trade Commissioners must have actual business experience seemed unsound. A real good businessman was unlikely to find a service such as this attractive enough and our own experience in the past had shown how difficult it was to get satisfactory businessmen for the posts of Trade Commissioners.

## 7. Protection of Indians Abroad<sup>1</sup>

Whenever any action is taken by a foreign authority against an Indian an immediate enquiry should be made. What Mr. Sohan Lal<sup>2</sup> wrote to us is beside the point. He brought certain facts to our notice and we took no action whatever. This cannot be defended in the Assembly or elsewhere. Immediate action should be taken now and enquiries made.

1. Note, 21 February 1947. Extracts, Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, File No 55-22/47-O SI, p 1/notes, National Archives of India

2 (1907-1981), member of the Lahore Municipal Corporation, 1933-39, member, Punjab Legislative Assembly, 1937-45, founded the Oriental Bank of Commerce in Lahore in 1942 and was its chairman till 1946

## 8. The Need for a Liberal Visa Policy<sup>1</sup>

I agree with Mr Weightman's note<sup>2</sup>. Something should be done soon with a view to liberalising wartime restrictions and we should not wait for international decisions. At the same time it should be clearly understood that such decisions as we may now arrive at will have to be reviewed later.

The next step should be an inter-Departmental conference—Home, EAD and CR—to consider the matter fully. After they have arrived at some conclusions, HM (Home) and I can join the conference and finalise these conclusions. The matter can then be sent to Cabinet.

Personally I am strongly in favour of having as liberal rules as possible—I have indicated my general approach in the previous notes. I feel also that whatever the procedure adopted it should lead to quick decisions and there must not be delay. References from distant countries should be avoided, except in very exceptional cases. Our Consuls should have full authority to issue visas in accordance with our instructions to them. Only when they are themselves in doubt need they refer the matter to us.

Also I feel that no groups (such as ex-enemy nationals) should be banned as such as has been suggested. Perhaps in their case a reference might be laid down. It seems to me unfortunate to carry on the legacy of the war in this way. Usually this hurts the innocent and the desirable kind of persons and the wicked escape.

<sup>1</sup> Note, 21 February 1947. External Affairs Department File No 202(15)-P/46 (Part-I), pp 38-40/notes, National Archives of India.

<sup>2</sup> Forwarding the revised visa instructions from the Home Department, Weightman stated that though the whole question of passport and frontier controls was to be reviewed at a forthcoming international conference, "meanwhile it is important that considerable liberalisation of war-time restrictions should be effected."

9. To V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
23.2.1947

My dear Krishna,

I have your letter of the 15th February regarding Girija Shankar Bajpai. I was inclined to have the same opinion about him.<sup>2</sup> Your letter confirms this and I shall act accordingly.

About your letter of the 9th February, I agree with you that all this was badly done.<sup>3</sup> It is impossible for me to keep in touch with all the telegrams that issue from our office, especially when the Assembly is sitting. Nevertheless I do not think E A D. meant any deliberate discourtesy in this matter. They are used to communicating with India Office and send cables to them daily. In a matter of foreign diplomatic exchanges the formal permission of the King or the British Government is necessary and therefore the first reaction of E A D is to communicate with India Office. India Office of course does come into the picture at this stage for the appointments supposed to be made by the King. But what was wrong was the manner and time of doing it. You should have been informed and later, when the time was ripe for it, the formal intimation could have been sent to the India Office.

Of course, E A.D. as constituted do not particularly fancy an "outsider", that is outside the service, playing any important part in their particular domain. They do not like much that is happening in India and cannot easily accommodate themselves to it. This shows often enough. Most of the senior British officials are suffering from nerves. They do not know what their future is going to be. Should they resign immediately or not? It is a difficult period for them as well as us.

Do not bother too much about this. I know how irritating it is but it is not important enough. Your dignity is not suffering and will not suffer by this kind of thing.

I had a fairly long talk with Vellodi. He was worried about you as I am. We are all passing through difficult times. If the time is out of

1 V K Krishna Menon Papers, N M M L

2 Krishna Menon had commended Bajpai for his grasp of international affairs and considered him useful for the work of the reorganisation of the Indian Foreign Service and bringing efficiency into the External Affairs Department

3 Krishna Menon strongly resented the discourtesy shown by the External Affairs Department in totally ignoring him while telegraphing to the India Office its decision about accrediting India's ambassador to Paris and The Hague although this matter was the subject of discussion at The Hague between Krishna Menon and the Dutch Foreign Minister

joint we have to put up with it. I do not think it is a personal matter either for you or for me

Runganadhan has been informed privately by the Viceroy that he should resign and hand over charge for the present to Vellodi. The idea was to appoint someone else immediately in his place but I was successful in preventing this Runganadhan's impending departure had better not be mentioned to others yet.

I have received your letters about the arms traffic.<sup>4</sup> We shall do what we can at this end

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

4 On 14 February 1947, Krishna Menon reported on attempts by an Englishman and a supporter of the Muslim League to smuggle arms into India from Belgium, Czechoslovakia and Britain

## 10. Members of Parliament and Foreign Delegations<sup>1</sup>

Sir, I am suffering under a slight disadvantage in that I did not have the privilege of listening to the speech of the Honourable Mover of this Resolution<sup>2</sup> But I have listened to some other speeches. And then, when you asked as to whether Government accepted this Resolution or not, I was not quite clear in my mind, and I am not yet clear, what this Resolution means, because it seems to have a different meaning in the minds of the different Honourable Members who spoke, and I do not want to say anything which might introduce a greater measure of confusion and make people imagine that Government was accepting something which in fact they were not accepting. Obviously, as the Resolution is framed, nobody can object to it; certainly not the Government. We want members of the Legislature to be associated as far as possible; they are being associated, they will be associated So, there is

1 Speech in the Council of State, 24 February 1947 *Council of State Debates, Official Report of the Twenty-First Session of the Fourth Council of State*, Vol I, pp 128-142 The speeches of others have been omitted

2 The resolution moved by M Thirumala Row recommended that non-official members of the Central legislature be associated with various political, cultural and trade missions sent abroad by the Government of India

no difficulty about that. But the way this Resolution has been spoken upon seems to me to mean something much more than that, and Government does not agree with much that has been said in the course of this debate, so far as I have heard it.

As a matter of fact, ever since this Government came into office we have naturally tried to appoint such persons as we thought were the fittest to undertake the task. It is easy to criticise those selections; and possibly some better persons could be appointed. But I do submit that our choice has been on the whole rather good and has achieved results. After all, we go on commissions and committees to achieve certain results, not just to have the pleasure of visiting foreign countries. We have to send people who can play a suitable and fitting part there. Now, I have no doubt whatever there are many people in the Legislatures who are eminently suited for this work of going abroad on commissions. But I do not think it has been sufficiently realised what the nature of these commissions and committees nowadays is. It is, roughly speaking, 95 to 99 per cent highly technical matter. Every subject is almost a highly technical subject, and people who go there have to speak, not on behalf of this group or party or that, but on behalf of the Government, and represent the policy of Government. I should like that to be realised. Honourable Members said that every party should be represented, every group and every section in every province should be represented and so on.

It is not a question of competence. That does not matter. Nobody can be sent who does not represent the Government's policy. It does not matter what party he belongs to. It is desirable that different parties and groups should be represented. But only such a person can be sent as represents the settled policy of the Government. Otherwise he is not a representative of the Government as he has to be. This fact has to be remembered that whatever the matter—whether it is an economic matter or a trade matter or like the one before the United Nations General Assembly last October and November,<sup>3</sup> Government adopts a certain policy. That policy may represent the unanimous will of the country or it may be some kind of integrated policy in between two or three policies. Whatever that policy is, the delegates who go must unanimously represent that policy. It is an impossible position for two or three delegates to speak in different voices and to represent different policies there. That is the fundamental thing that has to be remembered. The first point to which I am drawing the attention of the House is that the conferences today are of a highly technical character. As a matter of fact, during the last 4 or 5

<sup>3</sup> Concerning South Africa's intent to annex South West Africa and the policy of discrimination being followed by the South African Government.

months two major conferences have been held, i.e., conferences to which major delegations have been sent. These two are the United Nations General Assembly and the Food Conference.<sup>4</sup> All these were highly technical, every one of them. There was a big conference which immediately preceded our coming into office, the Labour Conference at Montreal.<sup>5</sup> That too is a technical subject in a sense. To that, three groups of people were sent—Government delegates, employers' delegates and workers' delegates. So far as the employers' delegates and the workers' delegates are concerned Government has little choice. They send two persons normally as official delegates. These official delegates have to represent the Government's labour policy in the matter. They have to be persons connected with the labour movement so that they may represent the Government's policy. They must have intimate knowledge of labour legislation and the labour movement. This was just about the time we came into office—I think within a day or two. Some persons had been appointed and they were going. We sent Dewan Chaman Lal, who obviously satisfies the demand made in this Resolution, being a Member of the Central Assembly. He is also a noted labour leader in the country. The other person was an official of our Department dealing with labour problems, the very subjects that were coming up. It was desirable that a person completely in touch with the Government's policy in regard to labour welfare was sent. Because the workers and the employers were represented independently, the Labour Department had to be represented by a person able to speak definitely and authoritatively on what we had done and what in fact we intended to do. No other person, however able he may be, could have represented Government without that intimate knowledge of Government's policy. In that context where labour and employers were separately represented, nobody could have represented Government's policy so much as a person in intimate touch with that policy. We had to send one member from our Labour Department and the other was a Member of the Legislature I have mentioned two major Delegations, one to the United Nations Assembly and the other to the Food Conference. As regards the Food Conference, my Honourable colleague, the Food Member,<sup>6</sup> was responsible for that Delegation. He wanted some persons not only possessing sufficient knowledge of the problems but also in a sense popular

4 The U.N. Food and Agriculture Preparatory Committee met in Washington from 28 October 1946

5 The 29th session of the International Labour Conference began at Montreal on 19 September 1946. The following were nominated as delegates: Government delegates—Dewan Chaman Lal and S Lall, employers' delegate—David S Erulkar, workers' delegate—S S Mirajkar.

6 Rajendra Prasad

leaders He tried hard. I know he searched for these persons. Ultimately he decided to appoint Dr Katju, Minister of the U.P. Government, to lead that Delegation. Having decided that, each one of the rest of that huge Delegation was selected for his special technical qualifications.<sup>7</sup> As for the other Delegations, every one has been dealing with a special subject We have selected people—when I say "we", I mean each Department whether it was the Education Department or the Commerce Department or the Labour Department or the Food Department or the Commonwealth Relations Department—they selected people not only of eminence in the public life of the country but who represented certain aspects which are not always represented here Suppose, if I may say so, both the Houses are extraordinarily poor in the representation of women of this country and we want to give more representation to women in our delegation. We have sent women, we propose to send more women in the future as far as possible Nobody can dispute the representative character of the persons we sent. Even as regards women we consulted the All India Women's Conference, which is a very representative body. We consulted other organisations informally when selecting. But the point is that the field of selection really is very limited because we have to deal with highly technical problems today. All members of the Legislature who are technicians in that respect will certainly be selected for these particular problems But I should like Honourable Members to remember that the position is very different today and will be still more different tomorrow when really these Legislatures are a hundred per cent popular Legislatures, functioning in an independent India. We seem to forget this change We still think in terms of a Government which is separated by a huge barrier from the elected or the non-official members of the Legislature, Government functioning in its own sphere and the elected members trying to curb it or check it or push it in this direction or that We had that mentality in the past and we demanded by resolutions that a committee should be formed consisting of officials and non-officials—the popular phrase was a mixed committee of official and non-official elected members be appointed All this, if I may respectfully say so, is a relic of the past It has no meaning today, because both the officials and non-officials should equally represent the public There is no question of the elected member alone representing the public a whit more than an official member today or tomorrow So when you ask me whether I accept this Resolution, I am put in a difficulty I do not accept it with all this background of the past with which I have done and

<sup>7</sup> The alternate member for India was S V Ramamurti, Chief Secretary, Government of Madras.

finished. I cannot oppose it; I do not oppose it because we are following the policy laid down in this Resolution and we are going to follow it. But I do not accept the background which has come out in the course of the debate. I wish to bury it and put an end to it. I want the House to remember that as a matter of fact there will in future be more and more officials doing this work and less and less of non-officials. I want that there should be no mistake about it As the Government becomes more popular, inevitably it has to deal with highly technical matters and the persons who must represent that Government must belong to no party or group It is an impossible situation In highly vital international matters, parties are not represented, different views are not represented. It is the Government that is represented and it is for the country to elect a Government which is popularly representative of various sections in it That is a different matter Whatever the Government is, Government could have only one view. It cannot have two views. If it has two views, then the two views have to be integrated into Government policy It cannot have in public and international conferences two views. Therefore this difficulty arises in selecting people. If we select non-officials and men of eminence but who may not be agreeable to putting forward the Government view, we simply cannot send them. That is not the Government view We are not sending them just to give an opportunity to an eminent person of airing his views It may be very desirable in their own context We are sending him to represent the views of the Government on that particular matter. If those views of the Government are wrong, it is for this House or some other House to lay down the policy of Government which the Government must follow or resign. I perfectly admit the right of the Legislature to lay down the policy and if the Government is not prepared to follow it, it should resign and give place to another Government. But the policy ultimately that is to be followed has to be settled in advance and advocated by the representatives of Government that are sent there and no other policy; and no section, no party, no group can represent its own policy. So, Sir, I should like the House to remember this position, which is already a changed position from the past and which is going to change still further in the future as we approach independence, and many considerations that have been advanced now do not really apply to this changed position; and inevitably in this complex world today we cannot think of sending people on these important commissions just to give them training for some other future work. Some junior officers may go, some junior people ought to go, to gain training for the future. The difficulty is that we can hardly treat Honourable Members of this House or of the Central Legislature as junior people to be sent for

training. They are senior people with experience. We cannot treat them as anything else but as important delegates. We cannot send them, normally speaking, as advisers and helpers of other delegates. So we send them in that capacity. The field is limited. They have to be technicians or represent a particular subject.

But there is another matter in which Honourable Members of this Legislature can play an even more important part. I do not know if it is on the agenda today, but there was a Resolution<sup>8</sup> of the Honourable Member who has moved this Resolution about sending goodwill missions abroad. In that Resolution he has suggested a particular mission to be sent abroad, to South-East Asia I believe....

If I may, with your permission, say something not about that particular Resolution, but generally speaking it is desirable I think and it should be encouraged that Honourable Members of this House and the Central Assembly should go abroad carrying the goodwill of the people of this country to other countries and thereby help in creating further contacts with our neighbours and other countries. When that should be done, how that should be done, is another matter, because even in doing that, a certain official element becomes essential. In the past when a non-official mission went out, sent by the Government of India of the day, that mission could say and do what it chose. Really it did not commit the Government. Today if a purely non-official mission is sent out, as it well might be, it does in a sense commit the Government, because there is no tremendous barrier between the non-official element and the Government of the day today. Therefore what they say and do in a foreign country is important for us. It may commit us to an undertaking which we are not prepared to undertake. It may help us a great deal; it may come in our way—what they say and do there. In almost every one of our neighbouring countries today, Afghanistan, Tibet, Burma, Malaya, Siam, Iran or Iraq, special problems arise. We deal with them from day to day. We shall deal with them even more in the future. Many problems are what are called secret problems, dealt with rather secretly. It is quite conceivable that non-official members, perhaps not acquainted with the nature of the particular problem, may say or do something which might create difficulties in the future. Therefore, even in such missions it is desirable that some expert should be associated for handling those problems. But otherwise the mission might well be almost completely non-official carrying the goodwill of this country and this Legislature to other countries.

8. Recommending that a committee of five members from the Central Legislature be appointed to tour the countries of South East Asia and report to the Central Government on the condition of Indians there.

Of course it will always have to be borne in mind as to what is a suitable time to do so and a particular moment may not be suitable. For instance, if I may say so, just at present, in the next two months or so, or perhaps a little more, it would not be suitable to send any kind of mission to South-East Asia. It so happens that in a month's time South-East and West and North Asia is coming to Delhi for a certain conference, the Asian Relations Conference, and we are going to have a very eminent gathering of representatives of almost every country in Asia. The contacts we make will no doubt lead to other people going from here to visit their countries. That will be the time for our representatives to go abroad. Just for the present for us to send them abroad when others are coming here would be overlapping and that would not be a suitable time. Therefore, Sir, I beg to assure the House that in so far as members of the Legislature are concerned here, I entirely agree with the spirit underlying this Resolution that they should be associated as far as possible with those committees and commissions that may be sent abroad. But I should like the House to bear in mind various considerations in appointing such Delegations which we have to keep in mind ourselves.

## **11. Training for the Indian Foreign Service<sup>1</sup>**

This matter was considered at some length in Cabinet and the decision arrived at was not a casual one. That decision was in regard to one point against my own views which I had placed before the Cabinet.<sup>2</sup> After the Cabinet decision I thought that we should naturally submit to it, but as the pundits of the External Affairs Department feel so strongly about it and differ among themselves, it is perhaps necessary to reconsider the matter. I think it would be desirable, as Mr. Weightman suggests, for a small conference to be held, to which a representa-

1. Note, 25 February 1947. External Affairs Department File No 6(1)-FSP/47, pp 17-19/n, National Archives of India.

2 On 9 October 1946 the Cabinet decided to set up an Indian Foreign Service. Recruits should complete one year of training at headquarters in India before being sent abroad for study.

tive of the Commonwealth Relations Department might also be invited. I should like to be present there.<sup>3</sup>

2. I have read through all the notes<sup>4</sup> Much of course can be said for both the points of view expressed<sup>5</sup> Ultimately it becomes a question of emphasis as to whether the Foreign Service candidate should concentrate more on getting to know one or more foreign countries or on knowing the background in India. Obviously both are essential No person can effectively represent India unless he or she has a good knowledge of the history, culture, economics and current problems of India. Not only is an intellectual appreciation of all these factors necessary, but also an emotional awareness of them. He must be in tune with India as she was and as she is and must appreciate the dynamics of the situation This is one reason, among others, why a non-Indian cannot effectively represent India abroad.

3. On the other hand any representative of India in a foreign country will be ineffective unless he knows that country, its language and its people, can fit in with the life there and understand and interpret the various political, economic and cultural forces at work there. Many of our first rank men in India may not be suited for this work abroad because of their lack of knowledge and experience of foreign countries

4. We have thus to aim at both accomplishments There is a tendency to think that a person who has travelled abroad or knows a foreign language is therefore peculiarly suited for the Foreign Service. That of course should be the least of his accomplishments. He may have no real knowledge of foreign affairs or culture and he may be totally lacking in any appreciation of international affairs Also he may be ignorant of changing conditions in India and the Indian background.

3 The meeting was held on 4 March 1947 and was attended by Nehru It was decided that selected probationers should undergo a month's study of needs and potentialities of India and of international affairs, then proceed to foreign universities and return for departmental training in Delhi before being posted in missions abroad

4 The notes were prepared by H Trevelyan, K P S Menon, A Hydari and H Weightman, senior members of the ICS

5 Trevelyan K.P.S Menon and Weightman were of the view that foreign university training should precede departmental training in India while Hydari thought that recruits to the IFS should start with a sound knowledge of India

5. It is well known that after a certain age it is a little difficult to pick up easily a foreign language or to fit into a foreign environment Receptiveness decreases with the passage of years This applies both ways An Indian who has spent his early years in school and college in a foreign country is not only out of touch with his own country but out of tune with it and cannot easily fit in here An Indian who goes abroad for study or otherwise at a somewhat advanced age may pick up knowledge, but will find it more difficult to fit into the ways of life and thought of the foreign country

6. Presumably the candidates for the Foreign Service who have spent their early youth and educational period in India have thus derived not only a knowledge of the Indian scene but imbibed the atmosphere of India At the age of 23 or 24 they can safely go abroad and build further on the foundations acquired in India If their visit abroad is delayed, they may lose the receptiveness of youth and fall into a mental rut On the whole therefore I imagine it would be better for them to go abroad earlier rather than later. It was this argument that I had advanced in Cabinet, but the majority did not favour it. They were of opinion that a mere continuation abroad of the student period may not do much good. Some departmental training would give the candidate insight into actual problems and then he could apply his subsequent theoretical training to these particular problems Otherwise he might just treat his period abroad as a holiday. As Mr Weightman has pointed out, this possibility can be got over by the arrangements we make and by the periodical tests we may prescribe. After all if a person is really soft and likely to waste his time, he might do so either before or after the departmental training

7 Personally I feel that it is very necessary for our candidates to have a training abroad and on the whole I think that this should precede the so-called departmental training here

8 As regards the courses of study prescribed, I agree with Mr. Weightman<sup>6</sup> that riding or a course of motor mechanics need not be considered essential, though they are undoubtedly useful accomplishments and might be encouraged I think, however, that Hindustani should certainly be an essential feature of the course It is highly likely that Hindu-

6 Weightman, in his note of 22 February 1947, had suggested a course of two terms, the first being for general lectures and second for detailed study The curriculum was to include criminal and civil law of India, Indian history, general principles of economics and public administration

stani will play an ever increasing part in our work in the future, and a lack of knowledge of it is bound to come very much in the way of the members of our Foreign Service. This gives a certain advantage to those of our candidates who come from Hindustani-speaking areas of India. This cannot be helped. It may be that those who come from the Hindustani-speaking area should be required to attain higher standard in that language. They will have to learn both the scripts, Hindi and Urdu.

9. I agree with Mr Trevelyan's remark that we should not give particular advantages in our examinations to those who know foreign languages. This would mean encouraging well-to-do classes and discouraging others who have had no chance of learning a foreign language other than English. It is very important that we should not develop a special caste for the Administrative Civil Service or for the Foreign Service.

10. In our educational system stress is being increasingly laid on learning through crafts. The physical labour aspect is being emphasised so that the activities of the mind and hand should be coordinated. We have suffered too much in the past by a purely literary education. There are proposals also that every person before or after taking his degree should have to put in a year's labour in some kind of nation-building activity. This will be of great value to his own development apart from its national aspect. It should lead to a proper appreciation of physical labour, which unfortunately is looked down upon in India today. I would have liked, if that was possible, to include in the curriculum of the probationers' training school some aspects of handicrafts or physical labour.

11. I have said above that motor mechanics need not be an essential part of the curriculum, but no person who is unacquainted with the scientific background of modern life can be said to be educated. There appears to be no reference to science in the course prescribed. I do not quite know how this can be brought in. If the physical sciences cannot be brought in, at any rate, sociological sciences might well have a place.

12. I suggest therefore that a conference might be fixed up to consider the various questions that have been discussed in these notes.

## 12. Women in the Foreign Service<sup>1</sup>

I have carefully considered this matter There is a great deal of force in what the Foreign Secretary says in his note<sup>2</sup> and what he has told me in course of conversation. And yet I am very reluctant to lay down, as a rule, that women should be excluded from the Foreign Service. In practice, there will be difficulties and I imagine that very few women will come in Possibly none, to begin with, as the qualifications required are high But I am sure that any rule excluding them will raise a storm of protest from the women's organisations in India. We have encouraged them to think that they will not be excluded, though there is no definite commitment to that effect. I have no doubt whatever that sometime in the future we shall have to admit women, just as the British Foreign Service has recently removed the ban on them Also, I think that in certain circumstances and places women may be very suitable for this work. If it is admitted, as it is, that women may be appointed as Ambassadors or Ministers, it is difficult to exclude them from other posts in the Foreign Service

The disabilities which women suffer from in regard to public activity no doubt come in the way not only of the Foreign Service, but of other services also And, yet it has been possible to make suitable adjustments to overcome these difficulties It is true that, normally speaking, young girls cannot be sent to out-of-the-way places and remote corners of the world If there are very few women members of the service this difficulty will not arise and they can be sent to more suitable places. I do feel that the difficulties that undoubtedly exist are more than counterbalanced by the great advantage of throwing open the doors of the Foreign Service to women In effect, the arguments advanced against the entry of women into the Foreign Service are much the same as were advanced previously in many countries against the entry of women into any public service Opinion generally in India, as elsewhere, is against this exclusion I think we should function in tune with this general sentiment of the age and if in future any difficulty arises, consider it on its own merits

1 Note, 26 February 1947 Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, File No 4(4)-FSP/47, pp 6-7/n, National Archives of India

2 In his note of 22 February 1947, Weightman had suggested exclusion of women from the Indian Foreign Service as it would pose problems of posting and because they would have to resign after marriage

I, therefore, think that we should not say anything about the exclusion of women from the Foreign Service. A certain difficulty arises because the All India Administrative Service apparently intends to exclude them from its scope. I would have suggested that they should not be so excluded. However, we need not go into that question here. In effect, exclusion from the All India Administrative Service will indirectly have a powerful effect on their exclusion from the Foreign Service also. We might leave it at that without saying anything more on the subject in so far as the Foreign Service is concerned.

If, however, it does become necessary to make a clear pronouncement, I would be in favour of saying that women are not going to be excluded, but in view of certain obvious difficulties, special care will have to be taken about their recruitment. Further, it should be made clear that, in any event, suitable women may be appointed to high posts abroad, like that of Ambassador or Minister.

Any such decision would not tie our hands and would at the same time give a desirable impetus to the women's movement and to women's education in India. Personally, I think that later on our Foreign Service would gain greatly by the inclusion of some women. Indian women, I think, have something to give which is very valuable and it would be a pity to lose this or to close the doors of opportunity to them in this field of activity.

### **13. Cable to J.R. Jayewardene<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
27 February 1947

Our greetings on Lanka's Independence Day. We trust that Lanka will be free soon<sup>2</sup> and play her full part as a free nation in the advancing destinies of Asia. Letter follows.<sup>3</sup>

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N M M L.

2 Sri Lanka became independent on 4 February 1948

3 See *post*, section 11(IV), item 9.

**14. To V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi

27 February 1947

My dear Krishna,

I suppose you have met Sudhir Ghosh. Vallabhbhai Patel is sending him to London to act as Publicity Officer. It is a difficult job and, so far as I know, India House has not done this kind of work previously. I hope you will help and advise Sudhir Ghosh in his work. The present position is intricate enough and care has to be taken as to what should be done and what should not be done. Sudhir is earnest and enthusiastic and sometimes overeager. I do not know what experience he has of publicity work as such. But I am sure that he will try his utmost, and if he has your advice this will help him greatly.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 VK Krishna Menon Papers, N M M L.

**15. To Gustav Rasmussen<sup>1</sup>**

Dated 27.2.47

Your Excellency,<sup>2</sup>

It has given me great pleasure to receive Mr Toyberg-Frandzen, the newly appointed Danish Trade Commissioner in India, who has delivered to me the letter dated January 17th which you were good enough to write to me. The Government of India and I personally shall be happy to give Mr. Toyberg-Frandzen all assistance in our power to facilitate his work in India.

2. May I take this opportunity of thanking Your Excellency and the Danish Government for the most courteous and hospitable welcome which you gave to Mr. Krishna Menon when he recently visited Denmark? I trust that these exchanges may lead to the early establishment of direct diplomatic relation between our two countries to the mutual advantage of the people of Denmark and India

1 Ministry of External Affairs, File No 18(8)-Eur-II/49, p 5/corr, National Archives of India

2 Minister for Foreign Affairs, Denmark.

3. Please accept, Your Excellency, this renewed assurance of my highest consideration

Jawaharlal Nehru

## 16. India's Foreign Policy<sup>1</sup>

Jawaharlal Nehru. It has been repeatedly made clear that the Government pursues an independent foreign policy which, while seeking cooperation with the Great Powers, avoids entanglement in what is known as power politics. It is the function of our Ambassador in Washington and his staff to make known the general lines of Government's foreign policy to the people of the United States of America.<sup>2</sup>

x

x

x

x

JN (a) The arrangement thus far has been that the staff for the British Consulates in East and South Iran is provided and paid for by the Government of India, who also provide officers for the posts of Additional Counsellor, Consul for Indian affairs, and Indian Trade Commissioner in Tehran.<sup>3</sup> These officers are technically subordinate to the British Embassy in Tehran but are selected by the Government of India and are under their control

(b) The Government of India fully intend to have their own separate representation in Iran as soon as possible, but I would invite the Honourable Member's attention in this connection to the reply which I gave to his starred question No 269, on February 13th.<sup>4</sup>

1 Reply to N G Ranga in the Legislative Assembly on 4 March 1947 *Legislative Assembly Debates, Official Report*, Vol II, 1947, 20 February 1947-5 March 1947, pp 1453-1456

2 N G Ranga asked Nehru to state what steps Government had taken to see that India's policy of non-alignment was given due publicity in the United States

3 N G Ranga asked whether the Government contributed towards the pay of a diplomatic representative in Iran but had no control over his appointment or conduct

4 N G Ranga wanted to know whether the Government proposed to consider the advisability of having their own embassy and diplomatic representatives independent of the United Kingdom, in Iran

x

x

x

x

JN: (a) and (b) The Government of India are aware that Indians have had to suffer considerable hardships in occupied Germany generally<sup>5</sup> As much as possible has been done both by the Government of India and the Indian Military Mission in Berlin to help them.<sup>6</sup> The Honourable Member's attention is invited to the note on this subject recently published in the Press, a copy of which has been laid on the table of the House

x

x

x

x

JN So far as I know, there are no Indians there<sup>7</sup> Anyhow, the names of Indians have not been brought to our notice here. As a matter of fact, we have tried to get in touch with several Indians in Germany and about a little over two months back, when I was in London, I urged upon Mr Vellodi, the Deputy High Commissioner, to go to Germany to investigate this matter personally He did go there and he sent us a long report in which he mentioned the names of all the Indians whom he could trace there.

x

x

x

x

JN That is exactly what I have just said<sup>8</sup> I may say that probably not more than 20 Indians at the outside are there. It is a very small number; it may be a little more Most of them have refused to come back We have offered to bring every Indian in Germany back to India free We have given them full facilities So, if there are any difficulties, they are on their side They do not want to come back either because

5 G B Dani asked Nehru about "the deplorable plight of the Indians in British-occupied Germany" and what steps the Government had taken to remedy this

6 On 24 December 1946, the Government of India announced that the Indian Military Mission in Berlin had been authorised to offer loans and relief parcels to Indian nationals in Germany whose number was believed to be 79

7 N G Ranga wanted to know if the Government had tried to obtain any information about the condition of Indians in American, French and Russian-occupied portions of Germany.

8 Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal asked whether it was possible for the Government to send some sort of fact-finding commission to these territories.

(c) The Governments concerned A statement showing the financial arrangement is laid on the table<sup>11</sup>

11 Sardar Mangal Singh asked (a) about the number of evacuees and refugees of different nationalities still being kept in India, (b) whether any steps were being taken to repatriate them, and (c) who paid their expenses

## 17. The Future of Germany<sup>1</sup>

I have had these papers I think the draft telegram<sup>2</sup> might well be sent though there is nothing new in it. But before it is sent I should like to discuss the matter with Mr Weightman and Sir G S Bajpai. India cannot afford to be indifferent to the future of Germany This is primarily an European matter but it affects both directly and indirectly the peace and economy of the world A shattered and broken down Germany will make European recovery almost impossible

I am inclined to agree with the argument in the *Times* article of 5/2/47.<sup>3</sup> Germany will not recover or feel healthy till it has some kind of unity This is bound to come sooner or later To delay it is to delay recovery and at the same time encourage narrowly nationalistic urges which may lead to trouble.

But this is a complicated matter and we should not express any definite opinion at this stage

1 Note, 11 March 1947 Ministry of External Affairs, File No 5(52)Eur-II/49, pp 33-34/note, National Archives of India

2 The telegram stated that the Government of India were interested in the German problem because a satisfactory solution of it had worldwide importance and that the views of the Allied Powers, outside the Council of Foreign Ministers, should be respected

3 The *Times* wrote that German unity "may be dangerous but to attempt to repress it by constitutional half measures, in a treaty, would be to make more so."



SEEING K P S MENON OFF TO CHINA, 28 FEBRUARY 1947



VISITING THE RIOT-AFFECTED AREAS IN LAHORE, 30 MAY 1947

18. To E.C. Stucke<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi

12 March 1947

Dear Senator Stucke,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your letter of March 5th. I am glad to learn that the talk I had with Mr. Norman Corwin<sup>3</sup> has reached America and found welcome listeners

It was a great disappointment to me not to have met Wendell Willkie. I believe, however, that he has left a message not only for America but for the world which will have an encouraging influence over large numbers of people. There is no other way ultimately but the way of the *One World* of which Wendell Willkie spoke.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L
- 2 (1882-1955); a physician and a Republican politician from Garrison; served in the North Dakota Senate from 1931 till his death.
3. (b 1910), film director and producer and story writer.

19. Conditions of Indians Overseas<sup>1</sup>

The cut motion<sup>2</sup> presumably is a motion of some kind of criticism or censure of Government. I must confess that the Honourable Mover's cut motion is, if it is an impeachment, a very soft impeachment, and personally I welcome it not only on this occasion but on other occasions when subjects dealing with Indians abroad are brought up to this House. I welcome these opportunities because it is right and proper that this House should take a lively interest in the interests of Indians abroad. They look to us, and sometimes they look to us even more than our own people, because they are cut off, and the distance lends a certain charm to the Indians overseas.

1 Speech in the Legislative Assembly, 14 March 1947. *Legislative Assembly Debates, Official Report*, Vol III, 1947, pp 1924-1928.

2 Guvind Das moved a reduction in the demand under the head 'Department of Commonwealth'.

I shall briefly indicate one or two matters to which reference has been made. First of all, the Honourable the Mover asked us that the External Affairs Department and the Commonwealth Relations Department should not be kept separate. I agree entirely with him, and I might inform him and the House that they are not going to be kept separate. In fact they are being amalgamated Secondly, he said that they should be reorganised with better and larger staff to which he added that in this particular instance he did not wish economy to be considered at all. Well, it is not for me to say that economy should not be considered in this matter, but undoubtedly they have to be reorganized, they have to be enlarged, because thus far these departments have dealt with very limited number of questions and with a very small number of countries. The External Affairs Department in effect dealt with the Tribal areas and some interests in the Persian Gulf or round about there. It really had nothing to do with the external world. Then it started dealing with the United Nations Organisation and some other international conferences. Now it is spreading out to all countries and thinking in terms of embassies, legations, trade agents, consulates, etc. Obviously this requires a vast establishment and it must be enlarged.

Then he said that we should have representatives everywhere We agree in theory, but I should like the House to realize that this cannot be done quickly and suddenly; it takes time The technique of it takes time—approaching other countries, getting their agreement, discussing the type of representatives to be exchanged, and then choosing the personnel, and so on. We have, as a matter of fact, drawn up a kind of priority list, but we find thus far that we have not been able to give effect to it For instance, we had decided that within six months certain countries should have our representatives, and in the next six months some more, and so on, but we had to face a considerable number of difficulties and we have not been able to give effect to it thus far As a matter of fact, at the present moment — if I may refer for a moment to External Affairs — the demands made on us by various countries of Europe and America, chiefly South America, are such that we cannot fulfil them. We are not just in a position to fulfil them immediately. The House knows that Mr. Krishna Menon was asked on behalf of the Government of India to visit various countries in Europe and to convey our greetings and express our desire for exchange of diplomatic representatives. He has done that work with exceeding ability and success, indeed with so much success that we are hard put to it to follow it up, because almost every country which he visited has sent us sometimes vague, sometimes definite and formal proposals for exchange of representatives, and it has gone far beyond our priority list There is no doubt that we must have representatives every-

where. The only question is how long it will take us to do it, because it is no good at all doing it in a casual manner. I am anxious that our foreign service should be a first class service, especially in these early days when we are laying the foundation of it. Later on, one can take risks in the matter, but if the beginning is bad and unstable then the subsequent additions to the structure are going to be very bad indeed. I appreciate completely, as Honourable Members have repeatedly pointed out, that the qualifications for the foreign service are very stiff. Obviously the fact that a person has got a first class in the university does not necessarily mean that he is going to be good at a diplomatic job, nor does it mean that a person who has got a second class is going to be worse than him or may not be better than him. That is perfectly true, but situated as we are some kind of rough and ready tests have to be laid down for the initial stages because we want to avoid this watering down of the level. There is no doubt that we shall keep good men, and we will not take men who are not so good, but some tests have to be laid down, and if we do not lay down those stiff tests and leave it to the sweet will of persons to choose them, then there is a great danger of personal likes and dislikes and I want to avoid that. But at some later stage we may reconsider this matter and see how far we can get suitable candidates as a result of other tests. The Honourable Member mentioned about goodwill missions sent abroad. I take it that he was referring chiefly to what might be called the colonial territories because in the other places there is absolutely no need to send goodwill missions, though we may occasionally send a trade mission. In regard to these places we do want to send — we may call them goodwill missions or fact-finding missions — anyhow missions to keep in touch with our people there, bring us data and help in establishing closer relations with them. In fact we are thinking of having representatives there but if there is some delay in that, we might send small groups to go about some of these rather out of the way places and make the Indians there realise that we are thinking of them. As a matter of fact some two or three months ago the Commonwealth Relations Department broached this matter and we communicated with the Colonial Office in London in regard to establishing our representatives or agents in some of these colonial territories and also to send some missions. I regret to say that we have not received an answer yet in spite of reminders. What the delay is due to, I do not know. But, normally speaking, in such matters these offices take a long time, because they make references to the colonies concerned and communication is very slow.

Then, again, the other day a question was asked: I think it was about

Mauritius and unfortunately I could not give the exact figures.<sup>3</sup> Immediately after or during the last session we wrote letters to enquire and no answer came. Then we sent a reminder and they said that they had not received our previous letter and we do not know what happened to the previous letter. Even on this occasion we could not give the exact information and the information we have in our Departments is so completely out of date that I feel very greatly ashamed to answer some of the questions put here. So it is quite essential that we should have closer contacts with the colonial territories.

In regard to the foreign service, I might say that our conception of the foreign service is an inclusive service, containing in its ranks almost every person who represents India in any capacity, in any official or governmental capacity. Obviously that means a diplomatic service; it means the consular service, it includes also trade representatives, though obviously the trade representatives would necessarily also deal directly with the Commerce Department. But demonstrably it will be one service and you cannot separate the economic and other matters from the diplomatic matters. In fact nowadays the consul's work is primarily economic and commercial and is very little concerned with visas and the rest. There should then be this general service but that service will deal with separate Departments in order to facilitate work.

In regard to the various countries, to which reference was made, I do not want to say much about South Africa, because this subject has come before this House on many occasions previously. I should like to mention that we propose to do everything in our power in accordance with the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly to find a solution for the problem of Indians in South Africa.<sup>4</sup> Much has happened in South Africa since the resolution was passed, which has not been agreeable to Indian ears and which has irritated Indian public opinion. Nevertheless, we have remained silent, because we do not wish to create

3. Questions regarding the disabilities of Indians in Mauritius were asked by S.K.D. Paliwal on 4 March 1947. They concerned the restrictions placed on the dress and names of Indian girls in schools, the inadequate teaching of Hindustani in schools and colleges, and the low percentage of Indians employed in the public services.
4. The resolution adopted by the U.N. General Assembly on 30 November 1946 stated that because of the discriminatory treatment against Indians in South Africa, friendly relations between two member states had been impaired, and wished that the treatment of Indians in South Africa should be in conformity with international obligations under the agreements concluded between the two Governments and the relevant provisions of the charter. It also requested the two Governments to report in the next session of the Assembly the measures adopted to implement this resolution.

any difficulties in our path, so far as we can, in the way of a proper solution. That proper solution obviously can only be on the lines of the United Nations Charter, on the lines which influenced the United Nations General Assembly to pass that resolution, when they found that the South African Union Government was not acting up to the provisions of that Charter. We cannot accept any position of inferiority or segregation in South Africa. Nevertheless, we are prepared to consider this question with anybody, including the South African Government, if it so chooses, because this responsibility has been cast upon both of us by the United Nations General Assembly. We have waited for the last four months or more since the passage of this resolution in the General Assembly of the United Nations for the South African Government to take the initiative, because it was for them to take initiative: it was against them that the resolution was passed; they have been acting wrongly according to the United Nations Assembly and they should seek to set matters right. They have done no such thing yet. Still I want to say to this House and to others who may hear that we are prepared to consider this question and to make every effort subject of course to the fundamental principles I have stated and by which we stand. We are not going to stand on any question of prestige in regard to talking about or discussing the matter with anybody at any time.

In regard to East Africa, I can say very little, except that the House will remember that we sent a mission headed by Kunwar Maharaj Singh last year and they came back with a report which has been published.<sup>5</sup> The new Immigration Bills,<sup>6</sup> although not specifically aimed against Indians, obviously affect Indians more than anybody else and they contain various very objectionable features. We have objected and protested to them, although I must confess that I was very reluctant sometimes to go on objecting and protesting without any or much result. I feel that our objection would be much more powerful, if we had some other sanction behind us in our own country. Obviously the main san-

5. The report suggested that as there was no material to indicate the absorptive capacity of the territories, a population census and an economic survey be held before immigration could be controlled.
6. Tanganyika, Kenya and Uganda simultaneously passed Immigration Bills in April 1946 which were discriminatory against the Indian community. The Indian community in East Africa were apprehensive that although the Bills were non-racial they were nevertheless discriminatory against them. Section 5, for example, defined "Prohibited immigrants" as all except those who were born in the colony. Discrimination was also shown against immigrants who wished to engage in trade in that such a person had to hold a sum of at least £ 2500. Since most Indians went to Africa as traders, this virtually stopped all immigration.

ction is independence. As a matter of fact I may tell the House that the fact of Indian independence coming has worked in two ways. On the one hand, naturally, it has raised the morale of our own people abroad and, on the other hand, the other people, realising that India is going to be independent soon, have begun rapidly to take some action before India becomes independent, in order to push through legislation, obviously since it might be more difficult for them to do it later on. So we have to face these two facts, one against the other. However, we must deal with this question wherever they arise. In the smaller colonies like Mauritius, Fiji and Guinea conditions are more peculiar still. Virtually they are Indian colonies. In some of them the majority of the population is Indian. Now what is going to happen to them in future, I do not know. Again this very fact that the majority of the population or a great number of them are Indians comes in the way of Indians being treated fairly there, because they feel that if they give Indians fair treatment, the Indians would practically become the dominant community in that area. Some of these factors are coming in the way inevitably and the problem will have to be solved to some extent.

There is another difficulty. As soon as India is completely independent the question of Indian nationality has to be considered. Is an Indian in Mauritius to call himself an Indian national or a Mauritius national? That will be for him to choose. Many of the Indians have lived there for three or four generations, for a hundred years or more. They do not even know India, they have never been to India. That is a question for the future. But this question of nationality is in a sense coming up now. Honourable Members should remember that Indians from Burma, Ceylon, Mauritius, Fiji and elsewhere have still not got out of the habit of thinking in terms of their common nationality, which is connoted by the somewhat unfortunate expression "British subject". In law whether one was an Indian or a non-Indian he was a British subject, whether he was in India or in England or Fiji or Burma or Ceylon. These questions did not arise previously. They are arising now, not only because India is on the verge of independence but even in the Dominions like Canada and Australia they are now emphasising the aspect of Dominion nationality. That is, a Canadian national will have certain rights which no other person will have even though he might be a British subject. It is a kind of dual nationality which is going on at present. This dual nationality is likely to become more and more separated. A Canadian national will be a Canadian national and a little more. So also an Australian national or a national in any other part of the British Commonwealth.

Now, this question affects us intimately in regard to the large num-

ber of residents in Ceylon, Burma, Malaya and anywhere else. It is very well to say that our people have been disfranchised in Burma.<sup>7</sup> But is he a Burmese national or not? Does he consider himself an Indian national or is he merely a visitor, a sojourner in Burma, carrying on business, looking at India as his homeland and coming back to it? If so, it is quite natural for the Burmese to think of him as a non-national and not as a Burmese national. In fact every single Indian in Burma, Ceylon and elsewhere will have to decide this question, namely, whether he wishes to continue as an Indian national or whether he wants to adopt the nationality of the country where he is. Naturally, even Indians who are Indian nationals, if they remain in Burma, must be treated properly and must have all rights. That is a different matter. But if he is an Indian national he cannot claim all the rights, voting etc., of the Burmese national. He has no right, if he is an Indian national, in that limited sense to claim the right to frame the constitution of Burma just as we would strongly object to non-Indians framing the constitution of India. It is an identical position.

Now, the difficulty arises in Burma owing to the fact that no choice has been given and no division has been made. For my part I will be quite satisfied if every Indian was given a chance of saying freely whether he wants to be an Indian national or whether he would be a Burmese national. If he says I want to be a Burmese national he should be accepted as such. If he says that he wants to remain an Indian national, then he has no further demand for franchise, of voting privilege, there. He has other claims which no doubt should be supported. At the present moment in Burma undoubtedly the qualification laid down for voting for the Constituent Assembly there has been unfortunate.<sup>8</sup> It limits Indians greatly though not so greatly as Honourable Member may think. But it does limit them very considerably. Since we heard about it we protested. May I also mention one other fact to this House in this connection? In all such matters when we deal with Ceylon or Burma or with any other similarly situated country we have given up the habit of protesting to the Governor or to the British Government. We do not

7. An agreement concluded between Britain and Burma on 27 January 1947 laid down that "a Burman national is defined for the purposes of eligibility to vote and to stand as a candidate at the forthcoming elections as a British subject or the subject of an Indian State who was born in Burma and resided there for a total period of not less than 8 years in the 10 years immediately preceding either January 1, 1942 or January 1, 1947."

8. For elections to the Burmese Constituent Assembly under the 1935 Act, out of 116 "general" constituencies only 8 were allocated for Indians and of the 16 "special" constituencies only 2 were allocated to Indian labour

go to the Colonial Office or to some office in London to protest against the Burmese or the Ceylonese Government. If we protest, we protest to the Burmese Government or to the Ceylonese Government. We do not want to make others our judges or arbitrators between us two. Therefore we carried this matter formally and informally to the Burmese Government—to the Chief Minister and other Ministers. We discussed at length with them and they told us that they felt that an injustice had been done when this statement was made in London. They instructed their law officers and they said, "It has become practically impossible for us in the course of the next six weeks or so to make any effective and radical changes in this matter, but we do assure you"—(and this assurance was given in public)—"that this thing will not cover the franchise for Indians in the New Constitution which we shall consider fully with you and with your representatives". I might mention that this matter was very ably handled by our representative in Rangoon, Dr. Rauf, and he is continually pursuing it. Although this unfortunate decision has been taken, the attitude of the Burmese Government—of the principal Ministers there—has been extremely friendly and cooperative in this and other matters. That is a pleasant change from the old attitude we were used to in regard to Burma.

One other matter, Sir. The Honourable Mover mentioned that we should never demand any extraneous rights for Indians in any of these countries. That has been our policy and that is going to be our policy. We are wholly convinced that it will be entirely wrong and objectionable for us to demand, say, in any African territory any rights which would be to the disadvantage of the Africans there. The rights of Africans must come first in Africa just as the rights of Indians must come first in India. As a matter of fact there has been a very happy change in the relation of Indians in Africa with the people of Africa. There has been growing cooperation between them in their respective demands and their work.

Then, in regard to scholarships I think the Education Department has already arranged for some scholarships from East Africa to East Africans who come to India. We are thinking of encouraging Indians in those territories also to come to India—some selected students—and to offer them scholarships for higher or technical education. In effect I believe that whatever the Honourable Mover wanted us to do has either been done by us or is in the process of being done.

20. To the Maharaja of Bikaner<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
18th March 1947

My dear Maharaja Sahib,

On my return to Delhi I have seen Mr. Panikkar's letter to Mr. Banerjee informing him that you have decided to make an endowment to the Benares Hindu University for ten scholarships for Indian students from British Commonwealth countries<sup>2</sup> I am happy to learn this and congratulate you on the step you are taking. As a matter of fact, only a few days ago I stated in the Legislative Assembly that we should encourage the grant of such scholarships Indians in these colonies abroad are not only cut off from India but have very few opportunities for proper education. They look longingly towards their mother country, even though they hardly know anything about it Now there is an even keener desire on their part to develop closer relations with India. In the long run the best approach to this problem on our part is to train some of their young men and women in India and then send them back.

The Government of India have themselves been thinking of making some such arrangements You have happily forestalled them. Of course, there is plenty of room and there is no question of the Government of India thinking that it has no further responsibility in the matter because of the step you have taken. We propose to go ahead with our scheme Naturally we shall not confine it to the Hindu University.

I am glad to learn that you propose, as a part of the scheme, to have a building attached to the Hindu University for such students.

At the present moment we have not got proper representatives in most of these colonies, but we hope to have them in the near future.

With all good wishes to you.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Commonwealth Relations Department File No 55-14/47-O SI. pp 19-20/  
corr. National Archives of India

2. On 13 March 1947, K.M. Panikkar had written to R N Banerjee, Secretary, Department of Commonwealth Relations, wishing to know whether the Department had any objection to the scheme

## 21. Diplomatic Relations with the Netherlands<sup>1</sup>

The Hon'ble Member for External Affairs said that he had received a message from the Netherlands Government to the effect that a decree had been signed by the Queen appointing a diplomatic representative to India. Correspondence had already been going on and it had been agreed that there should be an exchange of diplomatic representation between India and the Netherlands. We had not however come to any decision as to when this was to be. But in view of the action now taken by the Netherlands Government, we had no option but to welcome it. That would not necessarily mean that we shall be sending any representative to that country immediately. Our idea so far was to let our ambassador in Paris represent us also in the Netherlands.

In answer to a query, the Hon'ble Member for External Affairs said that it might well be that the Netherlands were influenced in rushing us in this way by their anxiety regarding our relations with Indonesia. The exchange of diplomatic representation, however, would not embarrass us in any way in this matter.

1 Remarks at a Cabinet meeting 19 March 1947. Cabinet Secretariat Papers

## 22. Elections to the Standing Committee for External Affairs Department<sup>1</sup>

Jawaharlal Nehru: Sir, I beg to move:

That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Honourable the President may direct, ten non-official members to serve on the Standing Committee to advise the External Affairs Department on subjects pertaining to British Baluchistan, the Tribal Areas and India's membership of the United Nations Organisation for the financial year 1947-48.

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1. 25 March 1947. *Legislative Assembly Debates, Official Report*, Vol IV, 1947, pp. 2428-2430.

JN. Sir, with regard to the point raised by Seth Govind Das it is a fact that we are amalgamating the two Departments.<sup>2</sup> In fact the decision has been taken and we are in the process of amalgamating them. But we found that it would be more advisable, even after this initial amalgamation, to keep most of the subjects separate. There are certain common subjects which we are going to deal with in a common manner. For the rest, as a first step, we propose that the two Departments in effect will be dealt with separately. Later on, the next step, may be after two or three months, will be a further amalgamation. A sudden amalgamation might upset the whole thing. In fact the work is territorial and the various territories dealt with by the two Departments are separate. The only questions that really arise are about some of the superior officers as to how they should be fixed up after the amalgamation. As I said we have for the present considered it more desirable to tackle certain subjects in a common way and for the rest to carry on as we are carrying on, and take the next step a little later. We feel also that probably it would be advisable to have two Committees. I have no objection to one Committee, but two Committees will be able to pay more attention to the specific subjects and territorial areas. Even from the point of view of convenience and expediency I would suggest two Committees. As to the amalgamation, as I have said, we have agreed and we are putting it into effect, but it will be by steps.

As regards the other point raised by two Honourable Members about the scope,<sup>3</sup> the language used in this motion that I have moved is an identical reproduction of the language previously used. I entirely agree that the scope of the External Affairs Department has largely increased and so far as I am concerned the Standing Committee should certainly discuss the many other matters that come up before the External Affairs Department. I have no personal objection to changing the wording of this, so as to include those other matters in its scope but I should like to place this before the House. There are many matters concerning foreign affairs which are supposed to be very secret and which we cannot even inform sometimes our own colleagues about it. It is not a question of secrecy with our own people but secrecy in regard to the rest of the world. If it gets into a paper, there will be difficulties. Even in the case of a point which is agreed to, it must not be known to anybody till it is formally announced simultaneously in the two countries.

<sup>2</sup> Govind Das proposed that the Commonwealth Relations Department and the External Affairs Department be amalgamated and one Standing Committee set up for both.

<sup>3</sup> Haji Abdus Sattar Haji Ishaq Seth and N.G. Ranga recommended that the scope of activity for the Committee be enlarged.

If there is a leakage of matter, important diplomatic repercussions may follow. Therefore while I am perfectly prepared to change the language of this motion in order to bring within its scope such subjects as come before the Department, I should like the House to consider this fact that many matters may not be able to be put up before the Committee. I am prepared to change the wording on those lines, if the President permits me.

**23. To Vallabhbhai Patel<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
29 March 1947

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter of the 29th about the Afghan Jewish refugees.<sup>2</sup> I appreciate what you have written and I realise that we have some justification for not extending the period of stay of these refugees in India. Still I would like to bring to your notice the enclosed telegram from our High Commissioner in London regarding this matter.<sup>3</sup> You will notice that the World Jewish Congress has specially pleaded on their behalf and have made a "very humble request that the Government of India may be pleased to permit these 300 persons to live in Bombay for another six months from March 31st 1947". The High Commissioner is inclined to recommend their case favourably.

2. The World Jewish Congress is a very powerful body and it is worthwhile doing it a favour unless this injures us seriously. It is well known that Jewish refugees have found it very difficult to find a place to go to. Almost exactly similar cases have arisen in several countries, including the United States of America. They have extended their

1. External Affairs Department File No 2(5) IA/47, pp 32-33/corr , National Archives of India
- 2 Vallabhbhai Patel was not in favour of extending the period of stay of the Afghan Jewish refugees in India as the Afghan Government did not pursue an anti-Jewish policy. He did not want to allow breaches of passport regulations without due cause and feared the possibility of the presence of Soviet agents among these Jews
3. Vellodi, in his telegram of 26 March 1947, had recommended favourable consideration on humanitarian grounds of the request of the World Jewish Congress to extend by six months the stay of Afghan Jewish refugees residing in Bombay.

period of stay repeatedly. If we push out these refugees, as we have every right to do, there is hardly a place in the wide world where they can go to. I agree with you that we should not allow breaches of our passport regulations without due cause and certainly not on false pretences. But so far as I know, there has been no actual breach and no false pretences. The facts relating to the Jews are well known and indeed this very question has been considered in an international conference where it appeared the Jews were facing the same difficulties in many countries. Theirs is an extraordinarily hard case and a measure of humanity would not be unjustified especially when we actually do a favour to a powerful world organization and community.

3. I do not know if you have any evidence of misbehaviour of these persons while in India

4. I am informed that the World Jewish Congress is doing its utmost to make arrangements for them elsewhere. For the present they have not succeeded, but they hope to be able to do so.

5. You will notice the High Commissioner's request that any orders that the Government of India may pass may be communicated to him immediately.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal

## 24. Ratification of the Peace Treaties<sup>1</sup>

It is about two years since the War ended in Europe and soon after that the War ended in the Far East also and still we are struggling to find some equilibrium for this so-called peace. The main treaty putting an end to the War, that is to say the treaty in regard to Germany,<sup>2</sup>

1. Speech on 11 April 1947 on the motion recommending ratification of peace treaties signed on behalf of India at Paris on 10 February 1947 with Italy, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Finland *Legislative Assembly Debates, Official Report*, Vol. V 1947, pp 3334-3339
2. Because of the deadlock between the Soviet Bloc and the Western Powers, the state of war between Germany and the Western Powers was not terminated till July 1951

has not taken shape yet, nor has the treaty in regard to Japan.<sup>3</sup> The treaties relating to other European Powers which are contained in this resolution have been drafted and signed and I stand up here to ask this House to agree to their ratification. These treaties are enormous bulky documents which, if the House is so interested, members can refer to. They have been placed in the library as well as on the table here. They have taken shape after prolonged discussions. First of all, I may briefly indicate the procedure adopted in arriving at these treaties. In December 1945, there was the Moscow Conference. At this Conference it was decided that treaties should be drafted by the signatories of the terms of surrender, that is to say, in each case those parties who were present at the time of the surrender should draft the treaties, which meant that all the treaties should be drafted originally not by the same set of people but by those who were particularly concerned with each of them. So, these drafts were prepared. Then came the Paris Peace Conference in the autumn of last year.<sup>4</sup> This Conference after several months of discussion came to certain tentative conclusions which were in the nature of recommendations to the Council of Foreign Ministers. Then the Council of Foreign Ministers sat down and drew up the final texts of the treaties round about the middle of January last. These texts were circulated to the Foreign Ministers and ultimately these treaties were signed in Paris on the 10th February 1947. There is a clause in the treaties that they have to be ratified by the other parties concerned, that is to say, the defeated parties but they come into effect immediately on ratification by the four Powers, the U.S.A., the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and France. In effect, they come into operation whether any other Powers sign them or not but we thought it right and proper that our representative should sign them on our behalf in Paris on the 10th February and therefore we authorised Sir Samuel Runganadhan, who had also led our delegation at the Peace Conference in Paris last year, to sign them and he has done so.

Now, Sir, those treaties represent numerous compromises between the various Powers concerned, more chiefly between the two groups of Powers which sometimes come into conflict with each other whenever any subject is being discussed. The treaties, I suppose if one examined them carefully, will not be found to be very ideal in many respects, because of the inevitable nature of compromises India as such is not directly or intimately concerned with many matters raised in these treat-

3. A treaty ending the war with Japan was signed at the San Francisco Peace Conference on 8 September 1951.

4. 29 July 1946

ies which affect the boundaries in Europe and various other matters but India is intimately concerned because these treaties may lay the foundation of peace or of war, because when the time comes for the treaty with Germany to be finally drawn up and signed it will make a very great difference as to what Germany is going to be. The future of Germany will control the future of Europe, economically and otherwise, and therefore world peace depends very greatly on what the treaty with Germany may be. Therefore India is intimately concerned in that wider aspect, though not so much concerned with the smaller matters affecting boundaries and other internal dispositions.

Now, I may mention that at the Peace Conference and elsewhere, especially at the Peace Conference, whenever various matters were discussed, there was always an unfortunate tendency not to consider a matter on its merits as such but rather from the point of view as to whether a decision helped one party or the other. Merits were often sacrificed to that end and a country like India which tried to steer a middle course and tried to consider every matter on the merits found itself in a very difficult position, not only a difficult position but a position which was criticised by both parties, because we refused to line up with any bloc. I wish to make it clear that by our signing this treaty we do not line up with any particular bloc. In fact, the treaty itself is a compromise between those respective blocs.

The treaties may be divided into three parts, the political, economic and military parts. The military part consists either of zones of military occupation for a period or demilitarization and preventing those defeated countries from keeping armed forces. I shall only mention a few of the main points that arise in these treaties. There are many points of small detail which gave rise to a good deal of controversy. One of the points of dispute was the frontier between Italy and Yugoslavia, more particularly the future of Trieste. The frontier was determined and Trieste was given the status of a free territory with a more or less democratic council. Then another point that arose was in regard to the Italian colonies in North Africa. In these treaties Italy renounced all rights to her former colonies and it is further stated in the treaties that the wishes of the inhabitants will be considered in regard to the future of these colonies and commissions of inquiry will be appointed from time to time to find out what the wishes of the inhabitants are. Then, Sir, there have been certain changes in regard to Hungary and Yugoslavia. A certain part, a fairly small part of Yugoslavia, has been handed over and some frontier ratifications have taken place.

Then come the economic parts of these treaties, which concern mainly with reparations. We are not directly concerned with them and we are

not the sharers of these reparations at all with those countries. It was stated on our behalf that we would not claim any reparation from those particular countries, but a certain saving clause was put in,<sup>5</sup> I believe, to the effect that if we had any money to their credit, frozen or otherwise, then we could raise that matter. Probably one of the most contentious clauses in these treaties was with regard to the future of the Danube, about which there was rather bitter controversy. And the controversy is not completely settled or over yet, but some kind of provisional arrangements have been arrived at. So, I do not know whether it is necessary for me to take up the time of the House by going into these treaties in regard to the Balkans and Italy because it is a little difficult to understand the various rather complicated and intricate chapters of these treaties relating to a large number of points. It will serve little purpose if I were to detail them to the House. Therefore, I do not propose to take up the time of the House. But I do think it is right for us to associate ourselves with these treaties as we have associated ourselves with the United Nations and to beg of the House to pass this resolution which, in effect, is a resolution of ratification of these treaties.

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Jawaharlal Nehru: Sir, in regard to reparations the question really arises in connection with Germany and Japan. With regard to the small Powers India had very little to do with them in the course of War or otherwise. If the House likes I will give the figures of reparations actually mentioned in these treaties:

By Italy—100 million dollars to the Soviet Union, 105 million dollars to Greece, 125 million dollars to Yugoslavia, 25 million dollars to Ethiopia, 5 million to Albania.

By Rumania—300 million dollars to the Soviet Union.

By Bulgaria—45 million dollars to Greece, 25 million to Yugoslavia.

By Hungary—200 million dollars to Soviet Union, 100 million to Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.

By Finland—300 million dollars to the Soviet Union.

So the House will see that quite a large number of countries which participated in the War have not claimed reparations from these nations. In fact these are between the Soviet Union and the Balkan countries—

5. On 11 September 1946, the Italian Economic Committee was informed that while India had refrained from presenting a formal claim to reparations, it reserved the right to absorb Italy's assets in India. The budgetary cost of India's war against Italy was a hundred million pounds.

i.e., the Eastern countries—among themselves; and it is not considered suitable or fitting that India should also be a claimant. That is all that I have to say....<sup>6</sup>

6. The motion was adopted

**25. To V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
12th April 1947

My dear Krishna,

Thank you for your letter of the 10th April and for the copy of your report which was handed to me yesterday.<sup>2</sup> I have read this report carefully and should like to congratulate you on it. It is full of information and is going to help us not only in developing our diplomatic relations with other countries, but also in developing educational, cultural and trade relations

Your report will be considered by the External Affairs Department. After such consideration they will no doubt like to discuss it with you. I have suggested that Mr. Weightman, the Foreign Secretary, and Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai, Officer on Special Duty in E.A.D., might have a conference with you after they have fully considered your report. At a later stage I should like to join that conference.

You might find out from E A D. when you are likely to be required for such a conference or for any other purpose I suppose, in any event, this will not take place within the next three or four days.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, File No 1-Eur/  
47, p 65/corr. National Archives of India

2 See the succeeding item

## 26. On V.K. Krishna Menon's European Tour<sup>1</sup>

I received this report yesterday from Mr. Krishna Menon.<sup>2</sup> I have read it carefully. I find it to be a very good report of his visits to various countries mentioned therein and of the contacts he has established in these countries. The report gives us not only information regarding the exchange of diplomatic representatives but also much useful information about educational facilities, trade and industry.

The report should be considered carefully by E.A.D. I suggest that the Foreign Secretary and Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai might give it special attention and later confer with Mr. Krishna Menon in regard to the various proposals and suggestions he has made. When this has been done I should like to join such a conference

The report deals with many subjects of interest to various Departments of Government, notably Education, Industries and Supplies and Commerce. It would be desirable to convey to them the relevant passages in the report for such action as they may think proper.

Mr. Krishna Menon's tour has been followed with interest by Members of the Cabinet and it is desirable that they should be kept fully informed. I think we should place a copy of the full report in the hands of each Member of the Cabinet and also, possibly, of the heads of the Departments concerned. In particular, H.E. should be supplied with a full copy of the report.

After the preliminary discussions are over and some tentative conclusions have been reached, it may be necessary to place the matter before the Cabinet. The report should, of course, be treated as a confidential document.

1. Note on Krishna Menon's report of his visits to Denmark, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and Italy, 12 April 1947. Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, File No 1-Eur/47, p 26/notes, National Archives of India.
2. Krishna Menon reported that these countries were keen on establishing cultural, diplomatic and economic relations with India. However, in view of shortage of trained diplomatic personnel to head the missions in these countries, he proposed the grouping of a certain number of missions under an ambassador in London until missions were able to function independently.

## 27. Comments on Draft Visa Regulations<sup>x</sup>

I have gone through these papers with some care but I confess I have not a very clear picture before me as to what has emerged from the various conferences and consultations.<sup>2</sup> It is satisfactory that the points of difference have been very much narrowed down. I suggest that a clear draft of instructions be prepared now in the light of agreement reached with alternative viewpoints indicated in case of difference.<sup>3</sup> This will enable us to see the full picture. If necessary, I shall discuss the matter then with H.M. (Home) before it is sent to Cabinet.

In dealing with ex-enemy nationals, I presume the only countries that are really affected are Germany and Japan. Treaties with other countries have been concluded and ratified and it would be invidious and undesirable to treat them as if they still belonged to the enemy category. From Japan no one is allowed to visit other countries because of the regulations imposed by the American military authorities. Even the delegates to the Asian Conference were not permitted to come. So the question of our discriminating against Japan does not arise. More or less the same considerations apply to Germany which is under military control.

Reference has been made to the Soviet Union. We are on the verge of exchanging ambassadors with the U.S.S.R. and any discrimination against the Soviets would be considered an affront by them and create all manner of difficulties. They are not ex-enemy countries and are leading members of the U.N.O. Our relations must be based on full reciprocity. It is well known that the Soviet Union does not encourage foreign visitors. We can apply a similar rule to them. This matter will have to be discussed by our respective ambassadors later. We are likely to exchange consuls also.

1. Note, 13 April 1947 External Affairs Department File No 202(15)-P/46 (Part I), pp 56-58/notes, National Archives of India.
2. A meeting of the representatives of the Departments of Home, External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations was held on 14 March 1947 to consider the question of admission and control of foreigners in India.
3. There was no agreement on the question of entry of businessmen. The Home Department insisted on prior reference to government in their case so that it might be possible to exclude any businessman capable of "getting control over some particularly important branch of industry." The representatives of the Departments of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations held that the furtherance of genuine business interests was a legitimate object for entry into India and that economic protection could be sufficiently secured by a system of tariffs and economic controls.

About businessmen, whatever the actual rules framed, the mention of businessmen as such being excluded<sup>1</sup> will be unfortunate and will be misunderstood, especially in the U S A. where businessmen represent the topmost class

I suppose that in any event we shall have to reconsider our passport and visa regulations in the light of international decisions which are going to be taken soon. Meanwhile we should issue revised instructions and the sooner this is done the better.

Home Department might be asked to put up a clear draft as suggested above

4. It was suggested at the joint meeting that the word 'businessmen' be replaced by 'persons seeking entry to India for purposes of trade or commerce'

## 28. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
14th April, 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

Some days ago you mentioned to me the desirability of having an Appointments Committee for considering appointments abroad<sup>2</sup> I agreed with the proposal as indeed I had done previously when Lord Wavell was here. I think some such procedure would be desirable

2. As a matter of fact, when the Interim Government came to office in September last year, the procedure we followed was for all the Members of the then Cabinet to meet informally almost every day to consider matters of common interest At these meetings such appointments were considered and it was only afterwards that official action was taken.

3. When the Muslim League Members came in, I suggested a continuation of this procedure to them; but they were not agreeable to joining these informal meetings It became difficult to consult them on such issues

1 File No 173/GG/43-11, Collection 11, pp 73-74, President's Secretariat

2 Mountbatten had discussed with Nehru on 8 April 1947 the setting up of an Appointments Committee

4 If it is still possible, I shall welcome the formation of an Appointments Committee as suggested. Indeed there should be two such committees, one dealing with external appointments and the other with internal appointments. The former might consist of Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, Dr John Matthai and myself. The other committee, i.e., the one for internal appointments might consist of the Home Member, Sardar Patel, Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan and Sardar Baldev Singh. I think it would be desirable to have Sardar Baldev Singh in this second committee both because the Defence Member is interested in some appointments and because it is better to have another representative of a minor community associated.

5. Meanwhile many appointments are pending and some are of an urgent character. We shall have to consider in the near future the choice of Ambassadors for France and the U.S.S.R. This, however, is not an immediate issue. Before we send Ambassadors we intend sending counsellors to make the necessary arrangement. These Counsellors should be chosen within two or three weeks.

6 I have asked the External Affairs Department to send you the report which Krishna Menon has made on his European tour. This will also have to be taken into consideration. Several countries of Europe have expressed a desire to exchange diplomatic representatives with India. I have recently also received a letter from the Prime Minister of Nepal making the same suggestion. To all of these we have replied that we shall gladly exchange diplomatic representatives with them. We shall have to work out some system of priority or some other arrangement. Krishna Menon has made a suggestion in regard to this in his report.

7 All these matters are not urgent although they cannot be delayed long. As you are fully occupied with very important consultations and decisions, I should not like to add to your burdens at present. But I wanted to keep you informed of the position.

8 What is rather urgent is the appointment of new representatives of the Government of India to Ceylon and Malaya. I mentioned this matter to you in course of our interview. I suggested two names then: V.V. Giri for Ceylon and John A. Thivy for Malaya. Before approaching you formally in regard to these names, I wanted to have your personal reactions to them. You said, in regard to Thivy, that you would like to consult Mr. Malcolm John MacDonald, the Governor-General of Malaya. I should be grateful if you could kindly let me know when you receive a reply from Mr. MacDonald.

9. I might mention that Mr V.V. Giri was till recently the Minister for Labour in the Madras Cabinet I think he is peculiarly suited for the post in Ceylon which has to deal chiefly with Indian labour there. He knows the language and he has been intimately connected with labour questions for many years.

10. Mr. John A Thivy is an Indian Catholic who has long been resident in Malaya He is a Barrister-at-Law and is at present President of the Malayan Indian Congress. When I was in Malaya last I appointed him the Secretary of the Malayan Indian Relief Committee. I found that he had not only the confidence of all the Indian groups there but also that of the Malayans and the Chinese. He is a man of ability and integrity and is widely popular Indeed I understand that he is often consulted by the Malayan Government in regard to labour matters. He has met Mr. Michael MacDonald, the Governor-General, and Sir Edward Gent, the Governor of Malaya; also Mr. Ivor Thomas,<sup>3</sup> the Under-Secretary for Colonies A little before the fall of Singapore in 1942 Mr. Thivy's name was included in a panel suggested by the Government of India for appointment as the Government of India representative in Malaya. Soon after things took a different turn. Later he was closely associated with the Indian Independence League in Malaya in a civil capacity But I do not think there was any kind of charge against him, and it was generally admitted that he had behaved in a straightforward and honourable manner.

11. If there had been any Appointments Committee I would have gladly placed these names before it. As no such committee has been formed thus far, I have to refer to you direct.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3 Ivor Bulmer-Thomas (b 1905); Labour MP, 1942, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, 1945-46, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1946-47, later left the Labour Party.

## 29. To Sultan Shahrir<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
15th April 1947

My dear Shahrir,  
You will remember that just prior to your departure from Delhi we ex-

1. External Affairs Department File No 11-Eur/47, pp 66-67/corr, National Archives of India

changed letters regarding the air agreement between the Government of India and the Netherlands Government. Our Communications Member of Government has pointed out that some points have not yet been cleared up. I think he is right and my own letter<sup>2</sup> written to you was not as clear as it might have been. It is desirable that there should be no misunderstanding about this. In paragraph 1 of your letter to me you said that you are "prepared to waive all objections, provided that that agreement is enforced as only a temporary measure." In my reply I said: "The agreement itself lays down periods during which it will be applicable."

Now the fact is that in the agreement no period is fixed and, therefore, it is not a temporary agreement in the normal sense of the word. Article 10(c) provides that the agreement can be terminated on one year's notice. Thus although the agreement is not a temporary one it can be terminated on a year's notice. I trust that you agree to this.

The second matter pointed out to me is that the agreement mentions as possible route for air services "India through Burma, Siam, and Malaya to Batavia, Sourabaya, Koepang, via intermediate points and beyond in both directions."

Thus, I was not correct in saying that the agreement merely fixes Batavia as the terminus. So far as the Dutch services are concerned, it is for you to deal with the Dutch authorities. So far as we are concerned, we should like to have your approval of this part of the agreement. We do not wish to do anything without your approval. As a matter of fact, there is no immediate chance of our developing air services to Indonesia, but the agreement does give us that right and I should like you to confirm it.

As I have already told you, it is our desire to proceed in this and other matters in full consultation with you and the approval of your Government. I am sure there will be no difficulty in the future about our agreeing to any course of action affecting our two countries.

May I request you to send me an early reply, preferably by cable? The signing of the agreement is being held over till then and, as you yourself have recognised, it is advantageous to all parties concerned for the air services to be started soon.

I hope you had a pleasant journey back to Indonesia. It was a great pleasure to have you here. I hope that pleasure will be repeated.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. See post, section II(IV), item 15

30. To Sudhir Ghosh<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
15th April 1947

My dear Sudhir,

Thank you for your letter of the 28th March enclosing one from Brailsford. I am writing to him separately.<sup>2</sup>

This business of the luncheon at India House has become an endlessly complicated one. There is, of course, no harm in a lunch and the formation of a Friends of India Committee is, as I told you, good and to be welcomed. What I felt was and what I still feel is that it should be entirely spontaneous and non-official. Otherwise it loses its importance

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 Sudhir Ghosh Papers, N M M.L

2 See *ante*, section 3, item 10

31. Diplomatic Relations with Thailand<sup>1</sup>

The Hon'ble Member explained that we would not be handicapped in our dealings with Siam by appointing a Minister instead of an Ambassador to that country. The only difference between the two was that whereas an Ambassador had the right to request access to the head of the State to which he was accredited, a Minister had to wait until he was invited. If any country expressed a desire to exchange diplomatic missions with us at the embassy level it might be difficult for us to propose an exchange at a lower level. This difficulty, however, did not arise in regard to Siam.<sup>2</sup>

1 Remarks at a Cabinet meeting, 17 April 1947 Cabinet Secretariat Papers

2 The proposal to exchange diplomatic missions at legation level between India and Thailand was approved

### 32. Treatment of Indians in South Africa<sup>1</sup>

The Hon'ble Member for Commonwealth Relations said that so far the Government of the Union of South Africa had done nothing towards implementing the resolution regarding the treatment of Indians in South Africa passed by the General Assembly of the United Nations Organisation on the 8th December, 1946. The indications were, in fact, that the Union of South Africa was likely to reject that resolution. It was necessary, therefore, to consider whether we should take any initiative in the matter. It could do no harm, indeed, since by implication, the United Nations resolution did expect us to make such an effort, we should be morally and tactically on strong ground when the case came up before the General Assembly of the United Nations Organisation at its next session. Continuing, the Honourable Member for Commonwealth Relations said that if the Cabinet approved this proposal, it would obviously be better to continue Mr. Deshmukh as the High Commissioner until we knew how South Africa reacted to the proposed approach, for to relieve him formally of his office now would be interpreted as a final break with South Africa.

1. Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 17 April 1947 Extracts Lord Mountbatten Papers, Broadlands Archives Trust, Broadlands, Romsey, Hampshire

### 33. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
24th April, 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

Thank you for your letter of the 19th April regarding Appointments Committees. I am sorry for the delay in answering it. I must confess that I have not been able to make up my mind on this matter. In view of the other major changes that are imminent, it is a little difficult to consider the present proposal in isolation. If these changes are coming soon then probably it is not necessary to have any semi-permanent arrangement at present

2. The question of appointments to the Foreign Service abroad stands

<sup>1</sup> File No 173/GG/43-11, Collection II, p 75, President's Secretariat

on a completely different footing from internal appointments. About the latter I do not know anything, nor am I greatly interested except from the point of view of efficiency and integrity. The higher services are supposed to be connected directly with the Home Department. Therefore it is desirable to consider the question of internal appointments quite apart from that of external appointments and to consult the Home Member in regard to the former. For the external appointments, different criteria have to be applied.

3. One of my chief difficulties in regard to the proposal which you have made is that our minority Members of the Cabinet are excluded from the committees. I should very much like them to take their proper share in this work.

4. I suggest, therefore, that you might, if you so choose, consult Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in regard to the procedure to be adopted for internal appointments. Regarding external appointments, the one which is rather urgent is that of our representative to Ceylon. Mr. Aney, our representative, is coming to India<sup>1</sup> on leave very soon. I want to be able to tell him that he need not return to Ceylon. His term expired last year and he has been carrying on since then waiting for his successor. I have suggested Mr. V.V. Giri's name for Ceylon. If you like I can consult Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan informally in regard to Mr. Giri, though he has little to do with this subject. If Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan has no objection, I can have Mr. Giri's name sent to you for formal approval. I do not quite know what happens if Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan is not agreeable to my suggestion.

5. Other external appointments can wait for a while till some procedure is evolved.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 34. Suggestions For a Visa Policy<sup>1</sup>

This matter has been repeatedly considered at a Departmental level

1. Personal note for Sardar Patel, 26 April 1947. External Affairs Department File No 202(15)-P/46 (Part I), pp 62-64/notes, National Archives of India

and has also been up before the Cabinet once After many conferences the points of difference between various Departments have been narrowed down. Only two or three points now remain for consideration before the matter is sent up to the Cabinet for confirmation.

2. I would earnestly suggest that in regard to these three matters the suggestions I am putting forward might be considered and accepted We have to strike a balance between two considerations On the one hand, we do not want undesirable foreigners to come to India and add to our troubles. Hence restrictions on a free use of visas to all applicants are necessary. On the other hand, India, on the verge of freedom, is intent on developing friendly relations with foreign countries and nearly all foreign countries are equally eager to reciprocate in this behalf We have, therefore, to adopt a policy in regard to foreign visitors which will be appreciated by the countries concerned or at least which will not prove an irritant to them Nothing is more irritating than delays and difficulties in the way of obtaining visas. This creates a bad impression and the country which issues the visas (or does not issue them) gets a bad name. I think that in this formative stage of our country's life we should attach considerable importance to good relations with other countries. This will add to our international prestige and position.

3. I should like to draw attention to the following matters especially.

Regarding ex-enemy nationals. Both from the point of view of the policy adopted by the national movement in regard to the last War and also from the larger viewpoint and not keeping old feuds alive, it is desirable that we should not discriminate too much against ex-enemy nationals. As a matter of fact, this is not a matter of any practical importance. The ex-enemy nationals are Germans, Rumanians, Hungarians, Finns, Bulgarians, Italians, Japanese and Siamese. From this list Siamese have already been excluded. Of the other nationalities, the only ones that count are Germans, Italians and Japanese. The smaller countries included in this list hardly ever send visitors to India The Germans, Italians and the Japanese have suffered terribly in the War and are down and out. It is very difficult for them to send any of their nationals abroad. The Japanese indeed cannot send anyone as the American authorities there do not permit this In effect, therefore, very few cases are likely to arise of nationals of any of these countries coming to India It would be a pity to show our abiding hostility to these people by making any discriminating rules against them Generosity on our part would not injure us in any way and yet would be appreciated by the countries concerned. It should be remembered also that in the near future peace treaties will be concluded with all these nations. Indeed

the Italian Peace Treaty has already been ratified by the Government of India.

4. I would suggest, therefore, that a middle course might be followed As suggested by E.A.D., this is as follows. There should be no absolute ban on all ex-enemy nationals but prior reference to the Government of India should be required in respect of such cases. In the case of nationals of countries

(a) which are not members of the U N O.; or

(b) with which no peace treaty has been concluded, only those individuals should be granted visas whose admission to India is considered definitely to be in the national interest, e.g., technical experts and the like, or those whose application is supported on compassionate or humanitarian grounds, e.g., close relatives and dependents of persons already settled in India.

5. Under the heading "visas should be refused out of hand" clause (d) states "a person whose name is included in any of the suspect lists". I do not know to which lists reference is made and what authority has prepared them. It is quite possible that many of these lists date back from the past when the tests applied were very different from what they might be now. It is indeed possible that persons associated with the struggle for Indian freedom were previously included in the suspect list and still continue there. I would, therefore, suggest that this clause be removed from this heading (i.e. visas should be refused out of hand) to the subsequent heading "no visas should be granted without reference to the Government of India". This would ensure that no visas were wrongly granted and would, at the same time, prevent any injustice being done in ignorance.

6. There is a reference in the draft instructions to businessmen to whom it is said visas should not be granted without reference to the Government of India unless they fall in certain categories. Specific inclusion of businessmen as such is unfortunate and will be greatly misunderstood in other countries, especially the U.S.A., which considers the businessmen as fulfilling the most important function in society. I would suggest, therefore, that there might be no such semi-ban on businessmen and that a certain latitude be given to our Consular authorities. The instructions contain many clauses to prevent undesirables from coming in. The objective apparently is to keep out petty traders or men of no financial standing. This may be provided for without laying down a rule against businessmen as such. In a sense, the really dangerous businessmen who might affect India's economy are represen-

tatives of big trusts or combines. They cannot be kept out by our rules because they will have powerful support, including that of the Governments behind them. I would suggest, therefore, that the clause dealing with businessmen might be deleted from where it is<sup>2</sup>

7. There is one other rather minor matter. It is stated that visas will not ordinarily be sanctioned at present for tourists and holiday-makers. Generally a country encourages tourist traffic as it brings in a great deal of money. It may be that in the present circumstances owing to transport and accommodation difficulties such tourist traffic should not be encouraged too much. Yet oddly enough our Publicity Department, Railways etc are continually advertising in foreign countries to attract tourists. As a matter of fact, very few tourists come now to India and there is not likely to be any big invasion. It might be worthwhile making no reference to tourists or holiday-makers in this connection.

8. These are some of the points which I should like Sardar Patel to consider.<sup>3</sup> After he has decided on these issues, the matter can be sent up by the Home Department to the Cabinet for disposal. It is not necessary for the file to be sent back to the E.A.D.

- 2 In his note of 21 May 1947 Patel justified restrictions on businessmen on security grounds and for safeguarding the trade regulations, but waived the requirement of prior reference in the case of (i) persons proceeding on commercial business on behalf of the government of a foreign country or an international organization, (ii) persons proceeding on business considered by the Government of India or a Provincial Government to be of substantial and definitive value to India, and (iii) others who had business in India and were in possession of a valid 'no objection to return' certificate.
- 3. Patel accepted Nehru's suggestions with slight modifications in regard to ex-enemy nationals persons whose names were included in the suspect lists on political grounds and tourists and holiday-makers.

### 35. Chinese Activities in India<sup>1</sup>

I have read this report with interest.<sup>2</sup> It covers part of the War period. It seems to me that the legal and illegal activities of the Chinese in India have been somewhat mixed up. Obviously so far as the illegal activities are concerned, that is to say smuggling, crime, divulging of official secrets and espionage, they have to be dealt with like any other breaches of the law.

2. On the other hand normal cultural or other activities of the Chinese stand on a different level completely. Kuomintang is an official organisation of the Chinese Government. It is quite natural for the Chinese to organize branches of the Kuomintang in India, and we can have no objection to that provided their activities do not cross the border of legality. Indians in China or elsewhere would be encouraged by us to form organizations of their own. Similarly we cannot object to the Chinese having their organizations, cultural or political.

3. Again organizations to further Indo-Chinese relations have to be encouraged and have in fact been encouraged in the past. Professor Tan Yun-shan has been prominent in these organizations and is the head of the China Hall in Santiniketan. Dr. Rabindranath Tagore was a patron of this and I believe I am also a patron. In fact I performed the opening ceremony some years ago.

4. Generally speaking, Chinese activities *inter se* cannot be objected to by us unless they are illegal. Chinese activities in relation to Indians or Indian problems have to be watched more carefully. It must always be remembered that China is not only one of the principal Powers but is also our neighbour and it is our declared policy to cultivate good relations with China. We have therefore to be careful not to take any action which we cannot thoroughly justify and which may come in the way of those good relations. Considering everything the number of

1 Note, 29 April 1947 Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, File No 416-C A /47, p 4/notes, National Archives of India

2 The intelligence report commented: "a network of K M T offices in India to unite the Chinese in India under them, special schools run to spread K M T ideals, activities of a Chinese intelligence group indulging in espionage; Chinese indulging in smuggling and violent crime, considerable activity to establish close cultural contacts with India and a prominent role being played in this by Tan Yun-shan "

Chinese in India is small and largely confined to Calcutta and Bombay. The problem is a limited one and offers no great difficulty. If any difficulty arises, it should be dealt with normally in consultation with the Chinese embassy, and if possible after reference to our Ambassador in China.

5. A good test to apply to anything is this. Are the Chinese in India doing something which we would encourage our own people to do in China? If so, of course we cannot take objection.

6. The Chinese are well known for their guild system and for their settling disputes through their guilds I do not see how we can take exception to any kind of arbitration through their guilds or through some other methods

### **36. Indians in South Africa<sup>1</sup>**

The Honourable Member for Commonwealth Relations said that in accordance with the decision of the Government taken at its meeting on the 17th of April, 1947, he had sent a letter to the Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa informing him that the Government of India would gladly discuss the question of the treatment of Indians in the Union with a view to assisting the Union Government in implementing the resolution of the U.N.O. General Assembly. He had also written to the Secretary General of the U.N.O. informing him of this step. He had since received a reply from the Prime Minister thanking him for this friendly approach and adding that the Union Government had been desirous of raising the matter with the Government of India but had not been able to do so in the absence from South Africa of the Government of India's High Commissioner. The Prime Minister went on to suggest that the High Commissioner should return to South Africa with a view to discussing the question and exploring ways and means of arriving at a solution which would be satisfactory to both parties. Continuing, the Honourable Member for Commonwealth Relations said that in the absence of any indication as to the basis of the suggested discussions it was not clear to him how anything would be achieved by send-

1. Remarks at a committee of the Cabinet, 30 April 1947 Cabinet Secretariat Papers

ing back our High Commissioner who could, in the circumstances, act merely as a channel of communication between the two Governments. He intended to give further attention to this matter and prepare a note on it for consideration by the Government at a later date.

**37. To Lord Mountbatten<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
1 May 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

Thank you for your letter of the 30th April about Appointments Committees

2. I shall consult the Finance Member about the appointment in Ceylon

3. Regarding the appointment of a High Commissioner in London, I do not think any fresh appointment is necessary at this stage or for some time to come. Mr. Vellodi, the Acting High Commissioner, is a competent and senior officer who knows the High Commissioner's office and who has already done good work there. There appears to be no reason why he should be removed. A new man going out now will take some time to fit in I think, therefore, that Mr. Vellodi should continue.

4 As you know, E A D. and Commonwealth Relations have been amalgamated and a scheme for their amalgamation has been circulated among Members of the Cabinet. In this scheme it has been suggested that the present two Secretaries should continue in charge of the two main sections of the combined Foreign Department. It was pointed out, however, that it would be necessary, in view of the increasing nature of very responsible work and in order to bring about a proper coordination of the various activities, for some person to be appointed to supervise the whole Department. This person might correspond to the permanent head of the Foreign Office in London. I think that this step should be taken soon; otherwise work will suffer and there will be no proper amalgamation. I have, therefore, suggested to the Finance Department to consider the question of such an appointment. This means the creation of a new post in addition to those existing. That is to say,

1. J N Collection

the existing Secretaries remain, but besides them there is a kind of a Principal or First Secretary who, it has been suggested, might be called the Secretary-General. Such a Secretary-General would necessarily be a senior and experienced man of the rank of an Ambassador. The choice for such a post is strictly limited For the present the only suitable person that I can think of is Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai who is both very senior and has considerable experience of diplomatic relations and foreign work He is at present in E A D. working as an Officer on Special Duty. I have not mentioned his name to others yet or even to him. I thought I had better mention it to you first and then take such other action as may be necessary.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 38. To Jayaprakash Narayan<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
6 May 1947

My dear Jayaprakash,

The other day in the course of our talk I mentioned Nepal. I felt then that this was not the right time for any kind of satyagraha to be offered there. Since then I have had further and additional reason for thinking so. I am writing to Rammanohar on this subject<sup>2</sup> But I do not know when my letter will reach him. I am, therefore, writing to you also as you may be in touch with people in Bihar who are interested in this satyagraha I suggest that this satyagraha should be withdrawn. Otherwise it will come in conflict with some of our activities in regard to Nepal. I am perfectly willing to have my name mentioned in this connection if it is thought necessary. That is it may be said that the withdrawal was at my request.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 J N Papers, NMML

2 A meeting of the Nepali National Congress held at Jogbani in north Bihar on 10 April 1947, and attended by Lohia on special invitation, decided to launch a country-wide satyagraha in Nepal from 13 April in protest against the repressive policy of the government in putting down a strike in some jute and cotton mills in Biratnagar in March 1947, and to demand the introduction of civil liberties in Nepal

### 39. Diplomatic Relations with European Countries<sup>1</sup>

I agree generally.<sup>2</sup> The only question that arises at present is that referred to under head clause 4 in the above note. The other matters are consequential and a decision in regard to them would depend on various developments that might take place.

About making further informal contacts with countries not thus far approached, I think we should go slow for the present. We have our hands full.

About clause 7 also we have to go slow.<sup>3</sup> There is no reason why the present High Commissioner, Mr. Vellodi, should not begin the transformation of the High Commissioner's office so as to adapt it to its new functions. The question of its absorption into some other office does not arise.

Reverting to clause 4, there does appear to be a considerable advantage in adopting the proposal made in Mr. Krishna Menon's report. There is the lack of trained personnel and if we wait till suitable people are available in sufficient numbers this would mean inordinate delay. We took the initiative in this matter and we have had a very cordial response from the various countries visited. Any delay on our part would be misunderstood. The proposal also involves a certain planned approach to the problem which is obviously desirable. It does not come in the way of our developing embassies or legations in particular capitals. It should help in the process, and, whenever adequate arrangements have been made, the embassy or legation would deal directly with the Foreign Department here. Hence the proposal of having

1 Note, 13 May 1947. Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, File No 1-Eur/47, pp 34-36/notes, National Archives of India.

2 H Trevelyan, Joint Secretary, External Affairs Department, agreed with the principle, contained in clause 4 of Krishna Menon's recommendations, of a temporary group representation in certain European countries under a head of mission in London, in view of the lack of trained personnel to head separate missions in each country. He, however, doubted that this mission would serve as an effective training ground for the diplomatic staff to be appointed in the countries concerned.

3 Krishna Menon had recommended the conversion of the proposed mission in London into India's diplomatic mission there at the end of the temporary period. Trevelyan suggested that the existing high commission should be gradually transformed to serve as an Indian embassy after June 1948 and that a new high commissioner should be appointed to conduct this transformation.

a supervising ambassador in London for certain countries in Europe is a self-extinguishing one in course of time.

As for the countries to be included in the proposal I agree with the list given in Mr. Trevelyan's note, with the addition temporarily of Switzerland.<sup>4</sup>

A summary might be prepared for Cabinet dealing with the proposal contained in clause 4 only. The other matters need not be referred to in the summary. The full report has already been circulated

<sup>4</sup> Trevelyan proposed that group representation might be confined to Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Netherlands and Belgium, since a bigger charge would be unmanageable and also the application of this arrangement to the Soviet Union and France might be inappropriate

#### 40. To Sri Prakasa<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
13 May 1947

My dear Sri Prakasa,

I suppose you will be coming here on the 17th for the I.N.A. meeting and I shall see you then. Nevertheless I am writing to you so that you might think over the proposal I am making and give me your answer in Delhi.

2. The Prime Minister of Nepal, Maharaja Padma Shamsher Jung Rana, has asked us to send him someone of high degree to advise him about constitutional reforms in his country.<sup>2</sup> This is a short-term job and rather an informal one. He has not made the request officially to us but in a friendly way to me personally. I think we should respond to this friendly gesture and give him such help as we can. This is not only desirable from the point of view of friendly relations between Nepal and India but also because we would greatly welcome any reforms in Nepal.

<sup>1</sup> J.N. Collection

<sup>2</sup> As a consequence of the strike of cotton and jute mill workers at Butanagar in March 1947, massive anti-Rana demonstrations at many places in Nepal on 13 April 1947 led the Prime Minister Rana to announce political reforms on 16 May 1947. He requested Nehru to provide guidance in drawing up a constitution for Nepal. So, Sri Prakasa, R.U. Singh and Raghurath Singh were sent from India

3. I should like you to go to Nepal for this purpose and, if you agree, I would like to send with you Sundaram<sup>3</sup> of the Legislative Department who is very good at drafting and that kind of thing. The two of you should make a good and efficient combination.

4. As I envisage it, you should go there for two or three weeks, at the most a month, but probably much less. After full discussions in Kathmandu and the consideration of various proposals you could come back. Perhaps at a later period you may have to pay another similar visit. In between you could consult and take the help in Delhi of B.N. Rau.

5 This will not take up much of your time and it will enable you to spend some weeks in a much better climate than Benares or Delhi. The work has obvious importance not only from the point of view of the future of Nepal but also in other ways. Nepal has been cut off from India and the rest of the world and they are hungry for help and advice from outside. They are looking eagerly towards India and we want to go as far as we can to help them.

6. This visit of yours will not be on behalf of the Government of India. It will be on the invitation of the Nepal Government. All I propose to do is to put you in touch with the Prime Minister of Nepal.

7. If all goes well and you agree to go, as I hope you will, I should like you to meet me and discuss the matter before you go.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

3 K.V.K. Sundaram (b. 1904), joined I.C.S. 1927, District and Sessions Judge, C.P. and Berar, 1934, Registrar, Nagpur High Court, 1936, worked in Reforms Office and Legislative Department of Government of India, 1936-47; Law Secretary, 1948-57, Chief Election Commissioner, 1958-67, Chairman, Law Commission, 1968-71, Adviser, Home Ministry, 1972-76.

## 41. To Jayaprakash Narayan<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
13 May 1947

My dear Jayaprakash,

I have received your two letters, one regarding Nepal and the other containing your correspondence with Kripalani.

2. About Nepal<sup>2</sup> I should very much like to have some kind of proof, if that is possible, about the killing or torture of women. As you yourself have stated, this is denied by the Nepal authorities. Rajendra Babu, who went to Biratnagar, inquired into the matter and could not find any substantial proof. I have repeatedly asked for names and details and they have not been supplied to me

3. However, this is not why I wrote to you.<sup>3</sup> As a socialist you will appreciate that action is taken not in the air and purely in furtherance of an abstract principle, but because the conditions are such as to demand action and there is some hope of results, those results might even be just strengthening of a cause. If action results in the breaking up or the weakening of an incipient movement, then it might be injurious

4. The very backwardness of Nepal and the strength of the forces opposed to any kind of satyagraha would lead one to hesitate before starting a movement. The result might well be a setback. It is possible that the Nepalese of the lowlands might irritate the Gurkha elements who are by far the strongest in the country and thus the movement may come into clash with a large and virile element in the population.

1 Jayaprakash Narayan Papers, N M M L

2. Jayaprakash Narayan wrote on 9 May that three women had been shot dead during a labour strike in Joggan and a large number of arrests including that of B P Koirala were made, and this led to satyagraha in Nepal. As an "irresponsible, tyrannous government" resorted to indiscriminate arrests and maltreatment of the arrested workers, the Nepali National Congress "naturally" extended the issue to the broader one of civil liberties. He refused to recommend the withdrawal of the movement till the Nepal Government released unconditionally all those who had been arrested and referred the demands of the striking workers to a board of arbitration.

3 See *ante*, item 38

5. Another point to remember is that Nepal, though certainly a part of India, is an independent country. It is not easy to function in an independent country from a base in another country. This raises international questions. If Afghanistan became the base for any movement in India, we will strongly object.<sup>4</sup>

6. It is difficult to judge of the Nepalese authorities from standards in India. They are totally unused to strikes and the like and are likely to deal with them in their own crude ways. It is possible, I think, to get relief from and even progress in Nepal to some extent by other means. Their authorities are anxious to do something and seek our co-operation.

7. In the larger context of India today on the verge of big happenings and possibly changes, it would be unfortunate to divert our energy to any smaller cause. It would also be wrong to create ill will with Nepal. More I cannot say now. I hope to talk to you about it when we meet.

8. The Working Committee is meeting on the 31st. I have requested Bapu to come here about the 25th so as to allow us ample time to discuss various matters. I would very much like you to be here about that time also, not only to discuss the future of the Congress but also the future of India which is taking shape in painful ways before us. So please try to come and, if possible, bring some of your colleagues.<sup>5</sup>

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

4 Jayaprakash replied on 17 May 1947, "I do not agree with you that the nationals of another country cannot take shelter in India or run an organisation to bring about political changes in their own country. It does not appear to me to be the duty of an Indian Government to suppress or forbid the political activities of the nationals of any foreign country."

5 J.B. Kripalani had written to Jayaprakash Narayan on 5 May 1947 that he was prepared "to meet you and some of the Socialist friends to discuss the points of difference, if any, between us." Reporting this, Jayaprakash wrote to Nehru on 10 May 1947, "When we met in Delhi you suggested that at the time of the next meeting of the Working Committee some of us might meet some of the important members of the Committee and discuss this matter. I don't think that by our just talking to Kripalanji any result would be obtained."

42. To James Beuttah<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
15 May 1947

Dear Mr. Beuttah,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your letter of the 5th May. I am sorry for the delay in answering it. I am afraid this letter cannot get you in India now and will have to go to Kenya.

It was a pleasure to me to meet you<sup>3</sup> and I am only sorry that owing to stress of work I could not see more of you.

Thus far five scholarships have been arranged on behalf of Government for African students. They are approximately of Rs. 200/- p.m. In addition to this if any special charges, such as capitation fees, have to be paid, Government will pay these also.

I hope that the number of African students will increase in the future and that more scholarships will be provided for them in India. As a matter of fact I had today a friend offering two additional scholarships for African students studying in India.

For the present we are only making arrangements for these five. As soon as they come and settle down we shall try to increase the number. You will realise no doubt that we are passing through a very critical phase in our existence in India, and we have to deal with very difficult problems. As soon as the future takes shape more definitely, we shall be able to pay more attention to other matters. You can rest assured that India will try to help in every way our brethren in Africa. We do feel a special responsibility on their behalf and we shall try to discharge it to the best of our ability.

We can have no objection to your sending more students at your own expense, but before doing so, it is desirable to get them admitted in colleges or technical institutes in India. Otherwise they might have to wait. There is a tremendous demand in our colleges and we cannot meet that demand.

1. Department of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations File No. 23-18/47-O SI, p 3/corr, National Archives of India
2. He attended the Asian Relations Conference as an observer on behalf of the Kenya Africa Union in India
3. Recalling his meeting with Nehru on 5 April 1947, Beuttah wrote, "I remember your words saying that when once India is free she will be the champion of all other coloured and oppressed peoples of the Colonies" He added that this was clearly demonstrated by Nehru's offer of scholarships to African students in Indian universities.

I enclose a message to the people of Africa.<sup>4</sup>  
With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

4 See *post*, section 11 (IV), item 24

### 43. To Ernest Bevin<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
17 May 1947

My dear Bevin,<sup>2</sup>

At our request, Krishna Menon visited a number of European capitals to explore the possibilities of India exchanging diplomatic representatives with those countries. He has presented a report to the Government of India and made certain proposals therein. Our Department generally approves of these proposals, but before we put them up before the Cabinet here for their approval and sanction, we feel that we should have further information as to their feasibility and the right method of giving effect to them. We have therefore asked Krishna Menon to go to London immediately and discuss the matter with the Foreign Office there.<sup>3</sup> After these discussions and such further inquiries as may be necessary, he will return to India.

Should you care to discuss this matter or any other matter with Krishna Menon, he will be at your disposal.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, File No -1-Eur/47, p 72/corr , National Archives of India
- 2 (1881-1951), British trade unionist, general secretary, Transport and General Workers' Union, 1921-40, Chairman, Trade Union Congress, 1937; Minister of Labour and National Service, 1940-45, Foreign Secretary, 1945-51
- 3 Krishna Menon was asked to ascertain the attitude of the British Foreign Office towards the location of the proposed mission in London which would be the nucleus of India's diplomatic missions in certain European countries

**44. To Bijaya Shamsher Jung Bahadur Rana<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi

18 May 1947

My dear Rana Saheb,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your letter of the 16th April. Owing to some mistake in my office this letter got mixed up with other papers and was only delivered to me yesterday.

2. It was a great pleasure to have you and your colleagues here for the Asian Conference. I have every hope that this Conference will yield far-reaching results in the future.

3. Since you wrote to me, Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai and Brigadier Rudra have visited Kathmandu on our behalf and they have reported about that visit and their talks with His Highness the Maharaja and others. We are taking early steps to exchange diplomatic representatives with Nepal.

4. I am glad you have written to me about the Biratnagar strike affair.<sup>3</sup> This was a small matter in itself, but small matters sometimes become big. It is, therefore, desirable to deal with them and settle them as early as possible. I quite believe that the reports that reached me about the killing and torture there are wrong. I find, however, that in some places the reports are still being circulated and believed in and in fact a young woman came to me and told me that her own relatives have been killed. It is quite possible that there is some misapprehension in the matter and some of those who have been arrested and taken away to Kathmandu are believed by their relatives to have been killed. Perhaps if information about the names and addresses of those who were arrested, are sent to their relatives, this propaganda will cease.

5. With all good wishes,

Yours very sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N Collection
2. (1915-1953), joined Nepal army, 1931, did relief work during the earthquake in Nepal, 1934, President, Development Board, 1943-50, led Nepal delegation in Asian Relations Conference, 1947, Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to India, 1951-53
- 3 He had said that the news in the press about the alleged killing, torturing and whipping of men and women at Biratnagar was false and malicious propaganda. With the arrest of the inciters, the situation was returning to normal at Biratnagar and the mills had already resumed work.

45. To Abdur Rahman<sup>1</sup>

Mussoorie

24 May 1947

My dear Rahman,

I am very sorry I am unable to meet you before your departure for New York. I understand that you are leaving Delhi on the 26th morning. I expect to reach Delhi in the forenoon of that day. So I shall just miss you by a few hours unless your plane is delayed. I wanted to meet you before you went away; but I do not want you to delay your departure. As it is you will be late by two or three days for the Palestine Committee.<sup>2</sup>

2. It is very good of you to agree to go at such short notice. I am happy that you are going and will represent us in this very important work. Things are pretty difficult here in India as you well know, more especially in the north. We have to face this situation and we shall, of course, do so to the best of our ability. But we cannot ignore our international obligations. The last nine or ten months have brought about curious changes. While in India we have struggled with our internal problems and felt somewhat disheartened at the turn events were taking, India's international position has gone up by leaps and bounds. But for our internal troubles we would have functioned internationally almost in line with the principal Powers. Even as it is, we have played an important part.

3. The Palestine issue is terribly complicated. Naturally our general sympathies are with the Arabs. And not only our sympathy, but our intellectual conviction tells us that Palestine is essentially an Arab country. To try to change it forcibly into something else is not only wrong but not possible. At the same time inevitably we have great sympathy for the Jews in their terrible distress. It is also perfectly true, I think, that the Jews have done very fine work in Palestine and have reclaimed land from the desert. Factories and orchards exist where there was only desert some time ago. There are cooperatives functioning successfully and the standards of the people have risen higher than anywhere in the Middle East.

4. How to reconcile the two claims is the problem before us. I do not venture to express an opinion except vaguely to say that perhaps an autonomous Jewish area within an independent Palestine might lead to a solution. One thing is certain that no final solution can come by

1 J.N. Collection

2. The special committee on Palestine began its deliberations on 26 May 1947. India was represented in it by Abdur Rahman

means of terror and violence either of the Jews or of the Arabs or of the British or any other Power. If it were possible to have some temporary arrangement for, say, 5 years to allow passions to cool a little and to consider a final settlement then, that would be desirable. But I myself do not see how this will be agreed to by the parties concerned.

5. The general attitude of India must necessarily be friendly to both parties but clearly indicating that an agreement must have Arab approval. We should proceed, especially in this fact-finding committee, in a judicial manner as far as possible. It might indeed be desirable not to say too much or to make any particular commitments at this stage.

6. You will function as the representative of India on this committee and will naturally refer to us any particular matters that you think should be cleared up. But you will also be a representative of the United Nations Organisation free to suggest what you consider fit and proper from the larger viewpoint of that Organisation as well as of the Arabs and the Jews.

7. Girija Shankar Bajpai must have given you the necessary papers. There are, of course, innumerable reports and I suppose you will have to wade through many of them. You will be supplied with all these papers by the U.N.O. office in New York who will give you every help in your work.

8. I need hardly add that every representative of India abroad has the honour and dignity of India in his keeping. He should function as India's representative and not that of a party or group. It is desirable for him to avoid discussions in regard to the internal politics of India, though of course it is not possible to remain mum in the course of private talks. We have chosen you not only because of your ability and judicial experience, but also because we have felt that you will add distinction on behalf of India to this Palestine Committee.

9. I wish you and your colleague, Viswanathan,<sup>3</sup> well in your journey and your responsible task.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Venkata Viswanathan (b. 1909), joined Indian Civil Service 1931, deputy high commissioner in Pakistan, 1947-48, chief secretary and adviser, Madhya Bharat, 1948-50, chief commissioner, Bhopal, 1950-52, joint secretary, Ministry of States and Ministry of Home Affairs, 1952-58, special secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, 1958, and secretary, 1961-64; chief commissioner, Delhi, 1964-66; Lt -Governor of Himachal Pradesh, 1966-67, Governor of Kerala, 1967-73.

**46. A Talk with the Representatives of the Nepali National Congress<sup>1</sup>**

Jawaharlal Nehru: What is the purpose of your coming?

M P. Koirala:<sup>2</sup> We heard you wanted us to call off our movement. We have not been able to know the reasons.

JN: How and in what form are you conducting your satyagraha movement and what are your demands?

MPK: The satyagraha has been launched on five fronts. All satyagrahis are Nepalese. The demands are (1) grant of civil liberties and (2) release of all political prisoners.

JN: What are the slogans and what do these satyagrahis do in the form of defying orders?

MPK: The slogans are: "We must attain civil liberties; We are ready to defy death; Political prisoners must be released." The satyagrahis distribute leaflets containing our demands, shout slogans, address meetings and take out processions.

JN: How many political prisoners are confined and what for have they been convicted? What are the charges against them? Have they been put on trial?

MPK: There are about 100 political prisoners. Most of them are connected with the strike and satyagraha and no trial has been done in their case. Some prisoners have been released recently including those who had been put into jail with life sentences in 1941.

1. New Delhi, 28 May 1947 Extracts from an account of the talk written by one of the representatives of the Nepali National Congress are printed here M P. Koirala and K.B. Pradhan were also among the representatives Jaya-prakash Narayan Papers, N M M L
2. Matrika Prasad Koirala (b. 1912), founder-member, Nepali National Congress, 1946, president, Nepali Congress Party, 1950, Prime Minister of Nepal and Minister of General Administration and Foreign Affairs, 1951-52, and 1953-55; founded Rashtriya Praja Party, 1952, ambassador to the United States and permanent representative at the United Nations, 1962-64

JN: Who are the 1941 prisoners and what for have they been convicted?

K.B. Pradhan. Altogether 500 persons of the Nepali Praja Parishad were involved, four were executed and 36 were awarded various terms of imprisonment. Of these six are still in prison and their state of health is very alarming.

JN: I do not know what is the strength of your movement That you can know better But any movement has got its time-limit and it has to cease thereafter. This I am telling you after the experience of so many years. You are young men, and it would be well to gain by our suggestions. The recent declaration<sup>3</sup> by His Highness can be utilised as a best plea for calling off the satyagraha. Especially in view of the situation prevailing in India it is not wise to continue the struggle. This is time to conserve all our energy as one united whole, as the days to follow are very critical.

MPK and KBP. The declaration is all vague and it seems to promise nothing. Besides, our duty is to consider about our friends in jail The intention of the Government can be very well known from the reforms committee on which there is not a single non-official person.

JN. Every government, big or small, suffers from a sense of prestige, and you cannot force any government to release political prisoners by threats or by continuing the struggle You can take my own instance. I was put into jail so many times, but not released immediately Why? This was just because of the false sense of Government's prestige

As regards the personnel of the reforms committee, how can you say that all are conservatives? They may be progressive too Who else is there in your Nepal among non-officials who can represent the people? Decidedly the Nepal Government cannot take men from your Nepali National Congress right away.

3. On 16 May 1947 the Maharaja of Nepal announced the appointment of a reforms committee to suggest plans for the establishment of a council consisting of elected and nominated members He also declared that local power would be transferred to elected village, municipal and district boards and that an independent judiciary would be set up

MPK: By non-officials I did not mean that people from the Nepali National Congress must be taken. But couldn't the Nepal Government throughout the length and breadth of the country find out one or two non-officials to nominate for the committee?

JN: You must not expect every thing at once. This is the first declaration of its kind in your country and you must consider it to be a very bold step on the part of your Maharaja.

MPK We admit it, but we are not very certain of its sincerity. We are told His Highness does want progress, but there are other reactionary forces at work which are retarding his pace. We have also learnt that both His Majesty<sup>4</sup> and His Highness are sympathetic towards our movement.

KBP: Not only sympathetic but His Majesty even offered to lead the procession, while His Highness organised processions through his confidential secretaries.

JN. I do not know what is the authenticity of your report. I also sent my representatives, two of whom were trustworthy and of responsible character, and they brought quite another report than you suggest

MPK: Did your representatives meet His Highness privately? If not, he could not have been able to give his correct impressions

JN. Yes, yes. They did meet him confidentially, and it was in confidence that he said that the progress of reforms was retarded due to the movement.

MPK: I do not know how he could say so. But he actually suggested to the organisers the way to move and said unless there was pressure from outside he would be helpless.

JN: What is the source of this report, and did you contact him personally?

<sup>4</sup> Tribhuvan Bir Bikram Shah (1906-1955); King of Nepal, 1911-55.

MPK: My own brother<sup>5</sup> had met him in camera, and he was almost on the verge of tears while describing his helplessness.

JN: How could you assert that your movement would not create more power for the reactionaries? They may be bent upon taking very stringent measures, and if they fall upon your movement relentlessly this would mean a complete setback to your toddling movement. If you call it off now and divert your energy to consolidating your power, and expand your propaganda among the masses, you could be better equipped for your next struggle. Calling off does not mean that you stop it for ever. If you find that the Government is not sincere, and it has not given what it declared, you can launch your movement again. Would it not be better if you let us be stronger? The Nepal Government has extended its hand of friendship towards us. You know that other nations are eager to exploit her to their benefit, but India must not give this chance. She must take it herself. That is what I want, and for this I have suggested to you to stop the movement for the present. Besides, the Nepal Government has sent objections regarding the base of your movement in British India. To give shelter to politicals is a different thing, and underground work can also be overlooked. But open bases to launch a movement against an independent country is quite a different thing. This is, however, superficial at present but under heavy pressure our position will be rather delicate.

KBP: Yes, we know. The reactionaries are prepared to give the western half of Nepal to America and the eastern half to Britain to retain their feudal hold.

MPK: Our Executive has decided that the Nepal Government should concede three points:

- (1) Recognition of the Nepali National Congress for constitutional activities,
- (2) Release of all political prisoners and
- (3) To translate into action the declared reforms within a certain date.

5. Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala (1914-1982), member, Communist Party of India, 1931-32, took part in the civil disobedience movement, 1931-32, member, Congress Socialist Party, 1935; imprisoned for participating in the Quit India movement, 1942-44; founder-member and acting president, Nepali National Congress, 1946; led an armed struggle which led to the overthrow of the Rana regime in Nepal in 1950, founded Nepali Congress Party, 1950, Prime Minister of Nepal, 1959-60, imprisoned, 1960-68, in exile in India 1968-76.

In this connection our president<sup>6</sup> who is in detention has agreed that anything decided by your representative<sup>7</sup> will be accepted in toto

JN: I have done my best to send an honest and sincere man as adviser, but his function will be purely advisory. He cannot be expected to make any award, specially when he is a foreigner in an independent country. He has been, however, asked to do his best. You could meet him and acquaint him with the condition prevailing in your country.

KBP: Would it not be humiliating for us to surrender unconditionally, specially when our movement is strong enough?

JN: Speaking about humiliation, do you not know how much I was humiliated in Kashmir? Kashmir is a smaller state compared to your Kingdom, in respect of status and power. Even there a man like me had to suffer humiliation. They could arrest me when I was going to be the President of India, at a time when power was going to be handed over to us by the British. Even then they could dare and did humiliate me. What have I been able to do for Kashmir? Nothing. You know many people who jumped into the fire relying on me are still suffering behind prison bars and I am here sitting *chupchap*. At times we have to swallow humiliations. A Government which is so backward that it does not know even about civil liberties has declared something about reforms and they are tolerably substantial for the initial stage, if really conceded. Your His Highness does not know the implications of civil liberty and you cry for it

KBP. They do know but they only pose as if they do not.

JN: Can you define what is civil liberty?

KBP: Yes, to my humble knowledge, I can. It means freedom of speech, press and association.

JN. Does civil liberty exist in Delhi now?

KBP: No, it does not. I know because of the special emergency. MPK We want only elementary liberties. Our movement has no weakness yet, so it seems rather premature to stop it just now. Probably it would be betraying our friends in jail too.

6 Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala.

7. Sri Prakasa.

JN: The most you could do was to prolong the struggle according to your strength. This does not necessarily mean that the Government will be compelled to release political prisoners. In spite of the continuation of struggle if you do not succeed in getting the release of the prisoners, it would mean that you lose the opportunity to save your face as well as to load obligation on the Government. We also were not released immediately after we stopped our movement. You know that. You have to give weighty consideration to utilise this opportunity best. You could utilise my name in the declaration that you called the movement off on my advice. These are my suggestions. You or whoever is controlling the movement should be the best judge. Even then I would emphasise to stop it for the present.

KBP. Could we not fix a time and give a sort of ultimatum?

JN: No. That means you bind yourself not the Government. When you cannot bind them why should you bind yourself?<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> On 2 June 1947 the Nepali National Congress decided to call off the satyagraha

#### 47. To Sudhir Ghosh<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
31st May, 1947

My dear Sudhir,

Your letter of the 28th May has just been handed to me<sup>2</sup> I can well understand the difficulties you may have to face and I shall try my best to remove them in so far as I can. As I explained to you I was anxious that any new Group of Friends of India should be completely non-official and informal. Of course we should keep friendly contacts with it and help it where necessary.

1. Sudhir Ghosh Papers, N M M L.

2. Sudhir Ghosh had written that certain people associated with the India League considered the Friends of India Group as a rival organisation. They were also spreading the story that Ghosh had been sent to London by Patel in spite of opposition from Nehru.

It was perhaps natural that the India League people should look with some apprehension at the formation of a new Group about which they had heard nothing. Also that various Britishers should fail to understand this new development. The best thing is to explain this clearly to the India League people as well as to others Obviously this new Group is in no sense a rival organization.

This has been written in some haste as we are on the eve of heavy work and developments.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## INDIA AND WORLD AFFAIRS

## II. The United Nations Organization

## 1. Telegram to Hansa Mehta<sup>1</sup>

Reference Lanka Sundaram's<sup>2</sup> telegram dated 31st January to Banerjee.<sup>3</sup> Draft resolution for Human Rights Commission. Please refer to paragraph 11 of our brief wherein we suggested establishment of Sub-Commissions. It was not our intention that any formal resolution be submitted on behalf of India to Human Rights Commission at this stage and before consideration by Sub-Commissions.<sup>4</sup> Having regard to all circumstances and our position in Indo-African dispute thorough examination of any resolution necessary. Reference to Security Council in draft resolution might involve amendment of Charter.<sup>5</sup> Also, we prefer to rely on General Assembly rather than on Security Council which was dominated by a few Powers. Suggest, therefore, that matter be postponed till Sub-Commissions report. If resolution already moved further discussion may be deferred. This course suggested as we appreciate that having submitted resolution you may consider it inappropriate to withdraw it.

1. New Delhi, 1 February 1947, Ministry of External Affairs, File No. 6(158)-cc/46, p. 67, National Archives of India.

2. (1905-1967), University lecturer, trade union worker and politician, member of Indian delegation to General Assembly and Human Rights Commission of United Nations, 1946-47, independent member of Lal Bahadur Shastri's 1952-57, author of *India in World Politics* and several other books.

3. Lanku Sundaram in his telegram of 31 January 1947 had asked for instructions whether the government wished them to propose, on their own, amendments to the resolution of the Human Rights Commission so as to make it more comprehensive and workable.

4. Paragraph 11 of the brief advised that at the Human Rights Commission there would be only a general discussion on the subject of an international Bill of Rights and that the Commission would not undertake to draft such a document before it was appointed a Sub-commission.

5. One of the clauses of the Indian resolution proposed to the Security Council called for a "cessation of all effective distinctions of race and colour in their ant-entente relations within the framework of the United Nations".

## 2. Instructions to Indian Delegates at the Economic and Social Conference<sup>1</sup>

I have read the brief<sup>2</sup> and agree generally with it. There are, however, a few relatively minor matters to which I should like to draw attention.

1. Item (5)<sup>3</sup> In regard to opium prohibitions, the insistence that India will take a number of years before effect can be given to it seems rather weak. This argument has been advanced, I think, for at least 15 years or possibly more. It is true that India has made considerable progress in this direction, but the process seems to be a very long one. Without committing ourselves to any immediate actions, we might say that we shall give full effect to this policy which we have accepted at the earliest possible date compatible with effectiveness. In the draft brief there is too much of an element of gradualness. As figures are not available it is difficult to say what the progress has been during the last 15 years.

2. The U.N. and their committees and commissions usually and inevitably look upon most problems from the European and American angle, that is, from the viewpoints of industrialized countries. Very often this is not the viewpoint of backward and less developed countries. Some emphasis has been laid in the brief on this aspect.<sup>4</sup> I should like greater stress if possible. An important point to remember is that the rapid development of these backward and less industrialized countries is essential not only in their interests but equally in the interest of world economy and of industrialized countries like U.K. and U.S.A. If India and other like countries remain as they are the effect on U.K. and U.S.A. is serious. A rapidly developing India will provide a big market for capital goods. Not to industrialize India would not only injure her and delay her progress, but would injure U.S.A. and U.K. economy seriously just when

1 Note, 12 February 1947 Ministry of External Affairs, File No 5(7)-UNO-I/47, pp 5-7/notes, National Archives of India

2 The brief was prepared by H Trevelyan for circulation to the members of the fourth session of the Economic and Social Council beginning at New York on 28 February 1947.

3 It dealt with the restoration of the pre-war standard of control of narcotics, the abolition of opium-smoking and the limitation of the production of opium.

4 The brief read that India would be interested to ensure that the interests of the less developed countries were kept in the forefront and that very special opportunities should be given to the backward and less industrialized countries.

they require export markets in order to maintain some kind of an equilibrium. This is not a question of favour or generosity to India but sound common sense and enlightened self-interest.

It is not good enough for the U.N. to say that equal opportunities will be given to all countries. Very special opportunities must be given to the backward and less industrialized countries. India's bargaining position in this matter is strong and we should take full advantage of it

### Item 20 (a)<sup>5</sup>

As Mrs. Hansa Mehta has already put in her resolution on Human Rights<sup>6</sup> (and this appears to have been supported by the U.K. delegates) it would not be proper at this or a subsequent stage to disown it in any way. The resolution has apparently been widely welcomed. It should be allowed to take its normal course. Our delegate should try to proceed with general agreement and not press it if there is any desire to defer or postpone it. There is no hurry and it is desirable to give fullest consideration to such an important resolution. But we on our part need not try to smother it or in any way appear to be embarrassed by it

The brief should go to the Cabinet. But it might be advisable to send the draft to Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar immediately so as to catch him before he leaves for U.S. Of course he will be told that this is subject to subsequent confirmations and possible variations.

- 5. It dealt with the reference by the General Assembly to the Panama draft declaration of human rights for consideration by the Human Rights Commission in its preparation of an International Bill of Rights
- 6. Hansa Mehta's draft resolution contained a draft declaration of human rights proposing that it should come into force within one year from the date on which it was passed by the United Nations General Assembly, and that violations of human rights should be dealt with by the Security Council

### 3. To Roger N. Baldwin<sup>7</sup>

New Delhi  
15 February 1947

My dear Roger,  
I have just received your letter of February 5th. It is always good to hear from you and to have news of you

The International League for the Rights of Man sounds all right and no doubt will do good work.<sup>2</sup> But I must confess that I have lost some of my enthusiasm for new organisations working for old objectives. I think they are worthwhile and I would hate to discourage any person in this matter. But I feel no urge to join them and be a distant spectator of what they do. Therefore I have kept away from quite a number of organizations recently, and I think I should stick to that policy for some time at least

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Baldwin wanted Nehru to be one of the vice-presidents of the International League for the Rights of Man which was likely to be recognized by the United Nations as a consultative body

#### 4. To Paul Robeson<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
7th April 1947

My dear Robeson,

My sister has sent me a copy of your letter to her, dated the 19th March.<sup>2</sup> I send you my good wishes for the meeting you are having on the 25th of April to discuss the theme: The United Nations and Colonial Freedom. This is a subject dear to our heart. Indeed, I do not think that the United Nations can continue to function successfully or unitedly, unless there is full freedom everywhere and an end of colonial domination, both political and economic. The policy we pursue in India has this for its objective. The time has come when the United Nations must clearly accept this objective and work to realise it. So, I send you my good wishes for this meeting.

Yours very sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 J.N Collection

2 In his letter to Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Paul Robeson wished her or alternatively the Indian ambassador to the United States to speak at the forthcoming meeting of the Council on African Affairs "for India and the Indian people."

## 5. Indian Representation in International Conferences<sup>1</sup> -

Mr. R.K. Nehru's note<sup>2</sup> draws attention to our real approach to this problem not only of representation at various U.N.O. commissions and councils but also to proper preparation for them. The matter, therefore, should be considered in this general aspect rather than from any personal point of view ..

It seems to me that thus far we have not dealt with this question in a thorough and methodical manner and there has not been the necessary coordination between various Departments. As a result some of the Government of India's representatives on various commissions abroad have not always adopted the same line Also, there has not been a definite policy which has been pursued. We have proceeded step by step rather spasmodically and without sufficient preparation and coordination. The matters dealt with in these commissions are of the highest importance for the economic future of India and we should deal with them as methodically as possible. We cannot approach the degree of preparation that is given to them in countries like the U.S.A. and the U.K., but there is no reason why we should not try to prepare for them to the best of our ability

For the present, we need not think in long-distance terms. But the next six months are full of important conferences abroad which overlap to some extent in regard to the subjects under discussion. These subjects are interrelated and should be considered from the point of view of one general policy and not separately. Therefore, it seems desirable that we should make some proper and efficient arrangements for the rest of the year and then think about the future later on. There should be no desire on the part of the E.A.D. to impose itself on other Departments which are concerned, and sometimes more concerned than E.A.D. E.A.D., however, is the channel for our foreign work and, therefore, it is fitting that E.A.D. might suggest to the other Departments concerned some method of coordinating this policy. Perhaps, one of the initial

1 Note, 14 April 1947 Extracts Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, File No. 5(60)-UNO-I/48, pp 7-9/notes, National Archives of India

2. R K Nehru thought that India could play a fuller and more constructive part in international conferences on economic issues and take the initiative in many matters "if one or more officers who are actually to participate in the discussions were required to give their whole-time attention to such problems."

steps to be taken should be an inter-Departmental committee of the Departments concerned with foreign commissions and conferences which should consider all the briefs that are sent out and the general policy that should govern them. Of course, the general policy is to be laid down by the Cabinet, but it is far better that this policy should be an all-embracing one and not confined to each particular topic. That topic can then be fitted into the general scheme.

I suggest, therefore, the formation of an inter-Departmental committee for this purpose.

In addition to this inter-Departmental committee there should be some kind of a pool of experts from the Departments concerned which should specialise in this work and from which representatives may be sent on the various commissions abroad. E.A.D. may offer to help by forming a nucleus of such a pool. Again this does not mean that E.A.D. wishes to impose itself on others, but rather that it wishes to give every assistance in the matter. The further consideration of this question might be deferred till Mr. Saxena<sup>3</sup> arrives.

Apart from this specialised pool for the future, something will have to be done for the next six or eight months. This matter cannot be delayed long, or else our interests will suffer. But two or three weeks' delay will not make much difference and, therefore, this can be taken up after Mr. Saxena's arrival.

This disposes of, for the time being, the second proposal made by Mr. R.K. Nehru.

In regard to the first proposal,<sup>4</sup> it seems obvious that a representative of ours functioning on the Economic and Employment Commission should also function on the Economic and Social Council in some capacity or other. Not to do so is to break the continuity of work and representation and to waste experience. Indeed, normally, the members of the Commission are appointed by the Council and are supposed to attend the Council meetings subsequently. On the last occasion when Mr. R.K. Nehru attended the Economic and Employment Commission it was our wish that he should also be present at the Council meeting.

3. Ramji Ram Saxena; joined Imperial Customs Service, 1923, Indian Government Trade Commissioner in Japan, and later in Australia and New Zealand, 1937-47, joint secretary, Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, July 1947-April 1948, Indian Consul-General in New York, 1948-51, High Commissioner in Canada, 1951-55, Ambassador in Burma, 1955-56.
4. R K Nehru proposed that he be appointed an alternate member of the Economic and Social Council in July 1947 as it would facilitate his handling of the work of the Economic and Employment Commission.

subsequently But the Finance Department wanted him back urgently and he was, therefore, unable to stay till the Council meeting in New York It would be desirable on this occasion to avoid this break and to request the Finance Department to allow him to represent us both on the Commission and the subsequent Council meeting. This will mean his absence for two months (June and July). During this period he will be on deputation from the Finance Department

It is desirable that the subjects coming up before the Commission and the Council should be given a thorough study and preparation from now onwards This does not mean that Mr R K. Nehru should leave his normal work in the Central Board of Revenue but that he should give such time as he could for this preparation which should be done in collaboration with representatives of E A., Finance, Commerce, Food and Agriculture, as well as other Departments concerned This is meant to be just a temporary short-term arrangement, so that proper attention might be paid and some definite policies might be evolved by the various Departments concerned . . .



## 6. To Liaquat Ali Khan<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
14 April 1947

My dear Nawabzada,  
You will have noticed in the press that a special session of the United Nations General Assembly is going to be held on the 28th of April in New York to consider the question of Palestine. We have not received official intimation of this date yet. But I suppose the news is correct

2. This is a special session hurriedly convened by requisition. It is highly unlikely that this session will decide anything or go deeply into this question. Probably after some discussion some kind of a committee might be appointed to report to the annual session of the U.N O to be held in September next. I understand that most countries will be represented by their Ambassadors or other local representatives in America. Special delegations are hardly likely to be sent to New York for the purpose.

<sup>1</sup> J N Collection

3. India is, of course, interested in many ways in this question. It is for us to consider whether we should send anyone from India on this occasion or ask our Ambassador there to represent us at this preparatory hearing. The time is very limited.
4. I am inclined to think that it would be desirable for some one person to be sent from here and for one or two of our representatives in America to be asked to join him. If someone is to be sent, it would be desirable for a person acquainted with the American scene and with the diplomatic world of the U.N.O. to go there. Of course he should be acquainted with the Palestine question fully and be able to represent our viewpoint adequately. He will be given a brief for this purpose. At this stage probably the brief will be rather general. Specific points, when they arise later, will have to be dealt with by us.
5. I take it that the brief will have to be placed before the Cabinet. The general nature of this brief should be to support the Arab contention that Palestine is essentially an Arab country and any decisions should have the consent of the Arabs. At the same time we can express our full sympathy for the sufferings of the Jews. It seems neither necessary nor desirable to take up an anti-Jewish position. But it must be made clear that we cannot support any proposition which involves compulsion of the Arabs. I need not go into any detail about this matter as we can consider it more fully later.
6. Meanwhile I am concerned as to whether we should send any person to New York or not, and if we send someone who he should be. A pure propagandist will not carry much weight in the U.N.O., and it is necessary for a person, who can deal with the question in a scholarly and restrained manner, to be chosen. It has been suggested to me that Dr. Syed Hossain might be asked to represent us on this occasion. I think he will be a suitable representative both because of his ability in presenting a case and his knowledge of America and the U.N.O.
7. I shall be grateful to you if you could let me have your views on this subject.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 7. The Palestine Issue<sup>1</sup>

The Hon'ble Member for External Affairs said that he had only one point to add to the summary. Yesterday he had received a telegram from our Ambassador in Washington to the effect that the delegates from the Arab countries were likely to insist on an immediate decision of the Palestine issue and to oppose the appointment of a fact-finding committee. To provide for that eventuality he suggested the deletion of the word 'strongly' from the last sentence of the draft telegram which it was proposed to send to our Ambassador, and the addition of another sentence at the end of the telegram as follows — "If, however, as you report in your telegram No. 342 dated 20.4.47 the Arab countries press for an immediate consideration of the substantive issues you should not oppose this"

1. Remarks at a Cabinet meeting, 23 April 1947 Cabinet Secretariat Papers

## 8. To J.C. Smuts<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
24 April 1947

Dear Prime Minister,

The Government of India earnestly desire to act in accordance with the terms and spirit of the resolution passed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 8th, 1946,<sup>2</sup> on the subject of the treatment of Indians in the Union of South Africa, and are glad to offer their cooperation to assist in the implementing of paragraphs two and three of the resolution.

1. File No L/P & J/8/306, I O L R , London

2 See *Selected Works* (Second Series), Vol 1, p 468

The Government of India have, therefore, pleasure in informing you of their readiness to enter into any discussion that the Government of the Union of South Africa may see fit occasion to initiate for implementing the resolution of December 8th, 1946.

The Government of India would also like to assure you that they will give their best consideration to any other proposals or steps that the Government of the Union may deem appropriate to suggest for the purpose of implementing that resolution.

Allow me to express the hope, on behalf of my Government, that the approach they now make may assist in finding a solution of our common difficulties, and, with this, to speed the restoration of normal and friendly relations between our two countries.

I remain,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 File No L/P & J/8/306, I O L R , London

## 9. Telegram to Asaf Ali<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
1 May 1947

Reuter's press message dated 29th April briefly reports discussion in Steering Committee on your question to British representative based on press report of House of Lords debate on Palestine in which it was stated that an announcement was made by an authoritative representative of British Government that "the United Kingdom was not prepared to say at this stage that it would accept any recommendations of the United Nations". Message describes you as pausing and turning to British representative and asking "Is that true? If so what is the use of considering any item on the agenda now?"<sup>2</sup>

I do not have full report of what you said but I would suggest your avoiding raising issues which might affect relations between India and any other country. As we have informed you in our brief we support Arab case generally Nevertheless we should avoid as far as possible needless controversy.

1 Ministry of External Affairs, File No 2(16)-UNO-I/47, p 54/corr , National Archives of India

2 The British view was that it would not contemplate bloodshed in enforcing a decision of which it did not approve

## 10. To J.C. Smuts<sup>1</sup>

Dear Field Marshal Smuts,  
I thank you for your message of 28 April 1947.

The Government of India note with satisfaction that the Union Government are desirous of raising this matter with the Government of India. They are, however, unable to agree that the absence of the High Commissioner for India from the Union debars the Government of the Union from initiating or conducting discussions with the Government of India, or would prevent the achievement of our common purpose of finding a solution to our difficulties.

The Government of India conceive the immediate task before our two Governments as the taking of appropriate and effective steps to implement the resolution passed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 8 December 1946.

The Government of India therefore request the Union Government to accept the implication of the resolution of 8 December 1946, as the common and immediate purpose in which our respective Governments can cooperate for finding a basis for a solution of the problem "with which our two Governments are earnestly concerned".

As soon as the Union Government have acceded to this request, a common basis for future discussion would be established. The Government of India would then appoint without delay suitable representatives to join with the Government of the Union of South Africa, or with such representatives as it appoints for the purpose, in the discussion and consideration of ways and means to resolve our difficulties. The Government of India would welcome the representatives of the Union Government to New Delhi for this purpose and make all the necessary arrangements, if such a venue is agreeable to the Union Government. They are, however, prepared to agree to any proposal that the Union Government desire to make with regard to the venue of such discussions.

In inviting the Union Government to accept the implementation of the resolution passed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 8 December 1946, as the common purpose of our joint endeavours, the Government of India are actuated by the earnest desire to act in accordance with the terms and spirit of that resolution and in complete loyalty to the principles and the Charter of the United Nations

1. 6 May 1947 L/P & J/8/306, I.O.L.R., London.

Organisation. They are fortified by the belief that in the endeavour to implement the resolution, the way to the solution of our common difficulties will be found.

The Government of India desire to state with frankness their position in regard to the proposal of the return of India's High Commissioner to the Union which you make in your message of 28 April. The High Commissioner for India to the Union was recalled for consultation,<sup>2</sup> as a consequence of the deterioration in relations between our two countries, of which the General Assembly of the United Nations has taken note. The Government of India have to state with regret that these relations have not only not improved since, but have deteriorated further. The reason which determined this course of action therefore continues While the Government of India seek and hope for an improvement of these relations and have taken the initiative in endeavouring to secure them, they are unable to revise their decision prior to an actual improvement in such relations They will gladly arrange for the return of their High Commissioner to South Africa as soon as such improvement takes place The Government of India, however, desire to assure you that the absence of the High Commissioner for India from South Africa will in no way hinder or prejudice their effective participation in joint deliberations of our two Governments, for implementing of the resolution of 8 December 1946.

The Government of India would appreciate your early reply to the proposals that they make and would like to assure you that they would always give their earnest consideration to any proposal that the Government of the Union desire to make.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2 The Indian High Commissioner to South Africa, R M Deshmukh, was recalled and the trade agreement terminated by the Indian Government in protest against the passing of the discriminatory Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act 1946 by the South African Government.

11. To Asaf Ali<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
14 May 1947

My dear Asaf,

I have been trying to follow both from your reports and the newspapers the proceedings of the U.N.O. Special Session for Palestine.<sup>2</sup> You have evidently played an important part in this session and have created an impression on others. That is as it should be. I have a feeling, however, that perhaps fewer commitments might have been made on our behalf in regard to certain matters.<sup>3</sup> It pays often enough not to give too frequent expression of our views. Though you balanced your observations, when there are many observations they are apt to irritate one party or the other needlessly as they appear to have done sometimes. There have been a few adverse comments here on what you have said and a general feeling that it would have been better not to say so much. Frequent incursions in debate might take away from the value of what one says. Criticism has been made here that there was too much showmanship and not enough diplomacy. Probably this is unjustified; but I wanted you to know what some people here have been saying.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 J N Collection

- 2 At Britain's request a special session of the General Assembly was held from 28 April to 15 May 1947 for constituting and instructing a special committee to prepare for the consideration of the Palestine question at the next regular session of the Assembly in September 1947. Asaf Ali was India's sole representative at the special session.
- 3 On 9 May 1947 Asaf Ali had suggested at the special session that the contemplated special committee should have as one of its terms of reference the preparation of a proposal for the "establishment without delay of an independent State of Palestine."

**INDIA AND WORLD AFFAIRS****III. The Asian Relations Conference**

## 1. A New Era In Asian Fellowship<sup>1</sup>

There is struggle and turmoil in various parts of Asia today and yet behind it all there is a new vitality. Asia, the mother of continents, is waking up from her old slumber. There is something of the turbulence of youth about her today and there is also something of the sparkle of youth in her eyes. An age is coming to an end and a new era is beginning for the countries of Asia. It is fitting that on the eve of this historic change India should play hostess to the representatives of the other countries of this continent with whom she has had close and intimate relations for ages past. Those relations and contacts were cut off when India became a subject country. Her land frontiers became an effective barrier to such contacts and practically the only window she had to the outside world looked at Europe, and more particularly England.

Now again after these centuries she is opening her doors and windows to all her neighbours and old friends and inviting them to meet together on her ancient soil which is so full of memories of the great deeds and great men and women. It is a high privilege for India to inaugurate in this way this new era of Asian fellowship and comradeship in the cause of peace, freedom and progress.

Many eminent men and women are coming to our country inspired by this common desire for the peoples of Asia to cooperate together in common tasks. Long and bitter experience has taught them that no country in the world today can isolate itself or even retain its freedom without cooperating with others. And so we meet together and for a moment the past two centuries fade away from our minds and we think again of earlier times when we used to function as free nations. And yet it is not of the past that we are going to think but rather of the future that is taking shape before our eyes and in the making of which all of us are taking part. That future, we hope, will be greater even than the past. It will not be a future for Asia alone but for the world, for we do not meet to form a new Asian bloc of nations against others but rather to cooperate with all the nations of the world to help in furthering the cause of peace and freedom.

Not even in the long and chequered story of Asia has there been such a gathering of representatives from the many countries of Asia as

1. Message, 3 March 1947, printed in the Inter-Asian Conference Special Number of the *National Herald*, 23 March 1947.

243 delegates from 28 Asian countries attended the Conference held at New Delhi from 23 March to 2 April 1947.

we are having in Delhi. The occasion is unique and full of historic significance May it be the harbinger of a closer fellowship in the works of peace and progress and may it light a flame which will burn brightly in every country of Asia and bring light in the darkness that envelops world affairs today.

## 2. Chinese Attitude to the Asian Conference<sup>1</sup>

Your telegram to Mrs. Naidu dated 10th March.<sup>2</sup> Unable to understand Chinese attitude to Asian Conference when Conference organisers have fully explained the position which in no way injurious to Chinese interests. Non-official cultural conference cannot be expected to consider political niceties. We are unable to say whom Tibetans represent till they come. Conference organisers do not wish to do anything which might offend Chinese susceptibilities or raise any question of status but desire to avoid saying anything regarding Tibetans which may involve controversy Probably best to call them representatives. We cannot officially or otherwise give directions to Asian Conference.

Conference secretariat issuing following statement. "Asian Relations Conference beginning 23rd March. The Conference will deal mainly with cultural, economic and like subjects, the object being to encourage closer cooperation between Asian countries. It will not deal with internal politics of any country. Invitations had been issued to various organisations and public bodies in Asia interested in world affairs and Asian cultural, economic and like relations. Certain Governments have also been invited to send observers as also some organisations in Europe, America and Australia. A large number of acceptances have been received and it is expected that a distinguished and representative gathering will attend The delegations will be seated in alphabetical order."

1 Telegram to K P S. Menon, 14 March 1947. Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, File No 10(9)-NEF/47, p 7/c, National Archives of India

2 K.P S Menon had stated that the Chinese insisted that the question of Tibet's political status should not be allowed to be discussed at the Asian Relations Conference and that the Tibetan representatives should be included in the list of Chinese representatives and treated as cultural representatives He also wanted a statement to be issued about organisations invited and seating arrangements

### 3. Telegram to Sultan Shahrir<sup>1</sup>

Madame Shahrir arrived here yesterday. Would very much like your coming here now. Am personally missing you greatly at Asian Conference. Realise your difficulties But if possible for you would request you to come here for final stages Conference which lasts till second April.

<sup>1</sup> New Delhi, 23 March 1947 External Affairs Department File No 14(19)-cc/46, Vol II, Sr. No. 109, National Archives of India

### 4. A United Asia for World Peace<sup>1</sup>

Friends and fellow Asians What has brought you here, men and women of Asia? Why have you come from the various countries of this mother continent of ours and gathered together in the ancient city of Delhi? Some of us, greatly daring, sent you invitation for this Conference and you gave a warm welcome to this invitation And yet it was not merely that call from us but some deeper urge that brought you here.

We stand at the end of an era and on the threshold of a new period of history. Standing on this watershed which divides two epochs of human history and endeavour, we can look back on our long past and look forward to the future that is taking shape before our eyes Asia, after a long period of quiescence, has suddenly become important again in world affairs If we view the millennia of history, this continent of Asia, with which Egypt has been so intimately connected in cultural fellowship, has played a mighty role in the evolution of humanity. It was here that civilization began and man started on his unending adventure of life Here the mind of man searched unceasingly for truth and the spirit of man shone out like a beacon which lightened up the whole world.

<sup>1</sup> Speech delivered at the plenary session of the Asian Relations Conference, New Delhi, 23 March 1947 *Asian Relations* (Asian Relations Organization, New Delhi, 1948), pp. 20-27

This dynamic Asia from which great streams of culture flowed in all directions gradually became static and unchanging. Other peoples and other continents came to the fore and with their new dynamism spread out and took possession of great parts of the world. This mighty continent became just a field for the rival imperialisms of Europe, and Europe became the centre of history and progress in human affairs.

A change is coming over the scene now and Asia is again finding herself. We live in a tremendous age of transition and already the next stage takes shape when Asia takes her rightful place with the other continent. It is at this great moment that we meet here and it is the pride and privilege of the people of India to welcome their fellow Asians from other countries to confer with them about the present and the future, and to lay the foundations of our mutual progress, well-being and friendship.<sup>2</sup>

The idea of having an Asian Conference is not new and many have thought of it. It is indeed surprising that it should not have been held many years earlier, yet perhaps the time was not ripe for it and any attempt to do so would have been superficial and not in tune with world events. It so happened that we in India convened this Conference, but the idea of such a Conference arose simultaneously in many minds and in many countries of Asia. There was a widespread urge and an awareness that the time had come for us, peoples of Asia, to meet together, to hold together and to advance together. It was not only a vague desire but a compulsion of events that forced us, all of us, to think along these lines. Because of this the invitation we, in India, sent out brought an answering echo and a magnificent response from every country of Asia.

We welcome you delegates and representatives from China, that great country to which Asia owes so much and from which so much is expected, from Egypt and the Arab countries of Western Asia, inheritors of a proud culture which spread far and wide and influenced India greatly; from Iran whose contacts with India go back to the dawn of history; from Indonesia and Indo-China whose history is intertwined with India's culture, and where recently the battle of freedom has continued, a reminder to us that freedom must be won and cannot come as a gift; from Turkey that has been rejuvenated by the genius of a great leader; from Korea and Mongolia, Siam, Malaya and the Philip-

2 The main purpose of the Conference was "to bring together the leading men and women of Asia on a common platform to study problems of common concern to the peoples of this Continent, to focus attention on social, economic and cultural problems of the different countries of Asia, and to foster mutual contacts and understanding" between them.

pines; from the Soviet Republics of Asia which have advanced so rapidly in our generation and which have so many lessons to teach us; and from our neighbours Afghanistan, Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, Burma and Ceylon to whom we look especially for cooperation and close and friendly intercourse. Asia is very well represented at this Conference, and if one or two countries have been unable to send representatives,<sup>3</sup> this was due to no lack of desire on their part or ours but circumstances beyond our control came in the way. We welcome also observers from Australia and New Zealand because we have many problems in common, especially in the Pacific and in the South-East region of Asia, and we have to co-operate together to find solutions.

As we meet here today, the long past of Asia rises up before us, the troubles of recent years fade away, and a thousand memories revive. But I shall not speak to you of these past ages with their glories and triumphs and failures, nor of more recent times which have oppressed us so much and which still pursue us in some measure. During the past two hundred years we have seen the growth of Western imperialism and the reduction of large parts of Asia to colonial or semi-colonial status. Much has happened during these years, but perhaps one of the notable consequences of the European domination of Asia has been the isolation of the countries of Asia from one another. India always had contacts and intercourse with her neighbour countries in the north-west, the north-east, the east and the south-east. With the coming of British rule in India, these contacts were broken off and India was almost completely isolated from the rest of Asia. The old land routes almost ceased to function and our chief window to the outer world looked out on the sea route which led to England. A similar process affected other countries of Asia also. Their common economy was bound up with some European imperialism or other; even culturally they looked towards Europe and not to their own friends and neighbours from whom they had derived so much.

Today this isolation is breaking down because of many reasons, political and otherwise. The old imperialisms are fading away. The land routes have revived and air travel suddenly brings us very near to each other. This Conference itself is significant as an expression of that deeper urge of the mind and spirit of Asia which has persisted in spite of the isolationism which grew up during the years of European domination. As that domination goes, the walls that surrounded us fall down and we look at each other again, and meet as old friends long parted.

In this Conference and in this work there are no leaders and no followers. All countries of Asia have to meet together on an equal basis

<sup>3</sup> Yemen and Japan

in a common task and endeavour. It is fitting that India should play her part in this new phase of Asian development. Apart from the fact that India herself is emerging into freedom and independence, she is the natural centre and focal point of the many forces at work in Asia. Geography is a compelling factor, and geographically she is so situated as to be the meeting point of Western and Northern and Eastern and South-East Asia. Because of this, the history of India is a long history of her relations with the other countries of Asia. Streams of culture have come to India from the West and the East and been absorbed in India, producing the rich and variegated culture which is India today. At the same time, streams of culture have flowed from India to distant parts of Asia. If you would know India you have to go to Afghanistan and Western Asia, to Central Asia, to China and Japan and to the countries of South-East Asia. There you will find magnificent evidence of the vitality of India's culture which spread out and influenced vast numbers of people.

There came a great cultural stream from Iran to India in remote antiquity. And then that constant intercourse between India and the Far East, notably China. In later years South-East Asia witnessed an amazing efflorescence of Indian art and culture. The mighty stream which started from Arabia and developed as a mixed Irano-Arabic culture poured into India. All these came to us and influenced us, and yet so great was the powerful impress of India's own mind and culture that it could accept them without being itself swept away or overwhelmed. Nevertheless we all changed in the process and in India today all of us are mixed products of these various influences. An Indian, wherever he may go in Asia, feels a sense of kinship with the land he visits and the people he meets.

I do not wish to speak to you of the past but rather of the present. We meet here not to discuss our past history and contacts but to forge links for the future. And may I say here that this Conference, and the idea underlying it, is in no way aggressive or against any other continent or country? Ever since the news of this Conference went abroad, some people in Europe and America have viewed it with doubt imagining that this was some kind of a pan-Asian movement directed against Europe or America. We have no designs against anybody. Ours is a great design of promoting peace and progress all over the world. For too long we of Asia have been petitioners in Western courts and chancellories. That story must now belong to the past. We propose to stand on our own feet and cooperate with all others who are prepared to cooperate with us. We do not intend to be the playthings of others.

In this crisis in world history Asia will necessarily play a vital role.

The countries of Asia can no longer be used as pawns by others; they are bound to have their own policies in world affairs. Europe and America have contributed very greatly to human progress and for that we must yield them praise and honour, and learn from them many lessons they have to teach. But the West has also driven us into wars and conflicts without number and even now, the day after a terrible war, there is talk of further wars in the atomic age that is upon us. In this atomic age Asia will have to function effectively in the maintenance of peace. Indeed, there can be no peace unless Asia plays her part. There is today conflict in many countries and all of us in Asia are full of our own problems. Nevertheless, the whole spirit and outlook of Asia are peaceful, and the emergence of Asia in world affairs will be a powerful influence for world peace.

Peace can only come when nations are free and also when human beings everywhere have freedom and security and opportunity. Peace and freedom, therefore, have to be considered both in their political and economic aspects. The countries of Asia, we must remember, are very backward and the standards of life are appallingly low. These economic problems demand urgent solution or else crisis and disaster might overwhelm us. We have, therefore, to think in terms of the common man and fashion our political, social and economic structure so that the burdens that have crushed him may be removed, and he may have full opportunity for growth.

We have arrived at a stage in human affairs when the ideal of 'one world' and some kind of a world federation seems to be essential, though there are many dangers and obstacles in the way. We should work for that ideal and not for any grouping which comes in the way of this larger world group. We, therefore, support the United Nations structure which is painfully emerging from its infancy. But in order to have 'one world' we must also, in Asia, think of the countries of Asia cooperating together for that larger ideal.

This Conference, in a small measure, represents this bringing together of the countries of Asia. Whatever it may achieve the mere fact of its taking place is itself of historic significance. Indeed, this occasion is unique in history, for never before has such a gathering met together at any place. So even in meeting we have achieved much and I have no doubt that out of this meeting greater things will come. When the history of our present times is written, this event may well stand out as a landmark which divides the past of Asia from the future and because we are participating in this making of history, something of the greatness of historical events comes to us all.

This Conference will split up into committees and groups to discuss

various problems which are of common concern to all of us We shall not discuss the internal politics of any country, because that is rather beyond the scope of our present meeting. Naturally, we are interested in these internal politics because they act and react on each other, but we may not discuss them at this stage, for if we do so, we may lose ourselves in interminable arguments and complications. We may fail to achieve the purpose for which we have met. I hope that out of this Conference some permanent Asian institute for the study of common problems and to bring about close relations will emerge; also perhaps a school of Asian studies; further that we might be able to organise interchange of visits and exchanges of students and professors so that we might know each other better. There is much else we can do but I shall not venture to enumerate all these subjects, for it is for you to discuss them and arrive at some decision.

We seek no narrow nationalism. Nationalism has a place in each country and should be fostered, but it must not be allowed to become aggressive and come in the way of international development. Asia stretches her hand out in friendship to Europe and America as well as to our suffering brethren in Africa We of Asia have a special responsibility to the people of Africa. We must help them to take their rightful place in the human family. The freedom that we envisage is not to be confined to this nation or that or to a particular people, but must spread out over the whole human race. That universal human freedom also cannot be based on the supremacy of any particular class It must be the freedom of the common man everywhere and full opportunities for him to develop.

We think today of the great architects of Asian freedom—Sun Yat-sen, Zaghlul Pasha, Ataturk Kemal Pasha and others, whose labours have borne fruit We think also of that great figure whose labours and whose inspiration have brought India to the threshold of her independence—Mahatma Gandhi We miss him at this Conference and I yet hope that he may visit us before our labours end. He is engrossed in the service of the common man in India, and even this Conference could not drag him away from it

All over Asia we are passing through trials and tribulations. In India also you will see conflict and trouble. Let us not be disheartened by this; this is inevitable in an age of mighty transition. We find a new vitality and powerful creative impulses in all the peoples of Asia. The masses are awake and they demand their heritage. Strong winds are blowing all over Asia Let us not be afraid of them but rather welcome them, for only with their help can we build the new Asia of our dreams Let us have faith in these great forces and the dream which is taking

shape. Above all, let us have faith in the human spirit which Asia has symbolised for these long ages past.

## 5. End of Exploitation<sup>1</sup>

Our two days' public session now draws to a close. But of course this is only the beginning of the work of this Conference and the delegates and observers who have gathered here will continue to meet from day to day, sometimes in plenary sessions, more often in their various group meetings and committees. The real work, I take it, will be done at these group meetings, where there will not be any formal resolutions probably, but where there will be heart to heart discussions and ideas thrown out, and then a collection of those ideas and thoughts. Finally, as hinted yesterday, I hope there will be some kind of organisation emerging from the labours of this Conference.

During these two days we have heard a large number of speeches by representatives from various countries. As a matter of fact there is hardly a country as far as I think, except one, that has been prevented from coming to this Conference. One country, Japan, is not represented here—and that for reasons which are beyond Japanese control or ours. I think during these two days we have heard the voice of Asia from all these different delegates. There have been differing notes sometimes, but all along there has been a common note about it and I think all of us have felt that however far we might be separated from each other in point of distance or in other ways, there is an essential unity about this continent and about our endeavour. For most of us I think these two days have been an inspiration not merely in what was said but in the many things that lay behind the spoken word. So we have laid the firm foundation of our work and I hope that it will continue and out of it will grow the great tree of Asian unity for which we have met here today, and out of that again will grow something even greater—a world peace based on world freedom. We cannot separate the fate of one nation from that of another today. It acts and reacts on each other and if any person thinks that Asia is going to prosper in the future at the cost of Europe he is mistaken, because if Europe falls it will drag Asia too with it. Or if Asia remains fallen, undoubtedly it would drag Europe and other parts of the world with it. Any intelligent

<sup>1</sup> Speech at the plenary session of the Asian Relations Conference, 24 March 1947 *Asian Relations* (Asian Relations Organization, New Delhi, 1948), pp 67-70

person can see that the problems of today can never be separated. You cannot have—it has long been said—a world part free, part slave. You cannot have a world part warring, part peaceful. You cannot separate these things into different compartments. You are going to have either war or peace in the world. You are going to have either freedom or lack of freedom in the world. Therefore when we think of freedom and progress in Asia necessarily we think of it in terms of other peoples' freedom also, not as an encroachment on others. If you look at it from another point of view, the economic point of view, in future any nation or any continent which thinks in terms of building up its own prosperity at the cost of exploiting others is not going to succeed. Undoubtedly, because of various special qualities and opportunities that they possessed, the people of Europe prospered. I do not criticise them or condemn them for that. They had the qualities for that and they succeeded. Nevertheless, their prosperity depended largely on the exploitation of various colonial and semi-colonial countries.

Today we have arrived at a stage when no country in Europe or elsewhere dare to base its prosperity on exploiting any other country. Indeed there is no need for it, because science offers us for the first time the opportunity to make the world prosperous all over, only if we work out along the lines of science, if we solve our problems on the scientific basis. So today there is this problem before some of the countries of Europe who have got used to certain national economies which are based on the exploitation of other countries. Unfortunately, not reading the lesson of history or understanding current affairs, they still tend here and there in Asia, Africa and elsewhere to try and retain that type of economy by which they had profited in the past. But even looking at it from the narrowest viewpoint of opportunism, that has now become an impossible undertaking for them. It will cost them much more than they might gain even if they succeeded. And they will not succeed in that. So the path of wisdom is obviously to give up that method of approach to these problems and think in terms of raising the general level of life in each and every nation—not to keep up the level of one at the cost of another. On the whole it is recognised today that it will not be possible for political domination of one nation by another to continue. But it is not perhaps sufficiently realised that it should be equally undesirable for the economic domination of one nation by another to continue. We have been wrapped up in political problems and in the political aspect of the national problem. In all countries, more or less, we have talked bravely of independence and yet we know well enough that many a country that calls itself independent is in the clutches of various economic interests of other countries. Economic inter-

dependence there is bound to be. No one can speak in terms of isolationism today. But the point is that this practice of economic exploitation of one country by another either directly or, what might be still more dangerous, indirectly cannot continue and if it does then inevitably it brings all manner of evils and conflicts in its train. You will not be able to end the conflicts of today unless you approach the problem from an entirely different viewpoint. These two days and the next seven or eight days will no doubt bring all these problems much more before you and you will examine them. You will not suddenly find a golden way out because there is no golden way out of difficult problems of life, but it seems clear enough that we see roughly a path before us which we of Asia should tread upon. We shall go on that path, I hope, hand in hand and cooperating together, always keeping the other hand for other continents who wish to take it. I am sorry that Prof. Bergman<sup>2</sup> thought that I had treated him unfairly. It hurts me that anyone should think that I had done so to him. As you know, it was my desire to avoid a controversy on any subject affecting the internal politics of the various countries of Asia in this Conference.<sup>3</sup> Obviously, apart from Palestine, there are many other problems about which the representatives of two countries might differ or might come into conflict ideologically or otherwise. Even within a country there are problems enough. If we entered that question we would simply lose track of the real work before us here and lose ourselves in interminable arguments.

Palestine is a highly important issue. Palestine might be a small country on the map, but undoubtedly it has become a very vital issue. The people of India, as is well known, have during these last many years sympathised very greatly with the sufferings of the Jews in Europe and elsewhere. We have, whenever an opportunity came before us, raised our voice in their favour or, at any rate, expressed our hope that their suffering would end. At the same time it is also clear, and I do not say this in any controversial spirit, that the people of India, necessarily for various reasons into which I shall not go, have always said that Palestine is essentially an Arab country and no decision can be made without the consent of the Arabs. We had hoped and we still hope that if the third party withdraws from Palestine it might be easier for the other parties more intimately concerned to settle their own problems

2 Samuel Hugo Bergman (1883-1976); Israeli philosopher and scholar, leader of the Palestine Jewish delegation

3. Karima-el-Said, delegate from Egypt, accused Bergman of raising controversial issues regarding the Palestine question. Bergman requested Nehru for a chance to reply and, upon his request being refused, walked out of the Conference

among themselves however difficult they might be, because, after all that problem, like all other problems, must be settled and if people do not settle them reasonably then they are settled unreasonably. Nature does not long accept an unsettled problem. Therefore I hope—and say so with all respect to all parties concerned, our Arab friends and our Hebrew friends—that this question of Palestine itself will be settled in cooperation between them and not by any appeal to or reliance upon any outsider.

## 6. Asian Relations Organisation<sup>1</sup>

Ten days ago you came here from distant countries and you were most welcome. During these ten days we have discussed many problems together and now we have arrived at the end of this Conference. The end, I said, but it is actually the beginning, the beginning for which we have laid the foundation formally this morning. All these nine days during which we discussed many problems we were preparing for this final act of laying the foundation of some kind of organisation which will carry on the work of this Conference. And today the plenary session of the Conference decided to start an Asian Relations Organisation.<sup>2</sup> They started a simple organisation with a Provisional General Council<sup>3</sup> and certain simple rules. At the plenary session they elected the General Council but of course nomination was the form in which various delegates were made to give their members. The Provisional Council did me the honour of electing me its President. Being irresponsible by nature, not thinking too much of what may lie in store in the future, I accepted that office. But it is a heavy burden that you have cast upon me because there are no known paths to tread except memories of long

1 Speech at the closing plenary session of the Asian Relations Conference 2 April 1947 *Asian Relations* (Asian Relations Organization, New Delhi 1948), pp 247-251

2 Formed on 2 April 1947 "to promote the study and understanding of Asian problems and relations in their Asian and world aspects, to foster friendly relations and cooperation among the peoples of Asia, and between them and the rest of the world, and to further the progress and well-being of the peoples of Asia."

3 The Provisional General Council was appointed to frame a provisional constitution, to secure the affiliation of the existing national units in their respective countries and to take steps for the progressive development of the Organisation. The Council was to consist of thirty members.





AT THE RECEPTION TO DELEGATES OF THE ASIAN RELATIONS CONFERENCE, NEW DELHI,  
28 MARCH 1947

ago, memories of today and hopes of the future. That is enough certainly, yet we have to build this organisation from the bottom up. It is not something which we merely have to carry on. In the building of this obviously we will not succeed unless all of us cooperate and function together.

I wonder if during these few days you have had the feeling which I have had when I watched all of you sometimes getting heated, sometimes objecting to this or that. Nevertheless, it was remarkable how much unanimity there was amongst people coming from the four corners of this mighty continent. I wondered often enough whether a similar conference held in Europe—that little continent which quarrels so much—or in the bigger continent of America, with people from so many countries, would have conducted its proceedings with so much amity and goodwill. I imagine that there would have been far more conflict, far less understanding and finally no particular result. I think there is something in this that while we may have many failings—we the people of Asia undoubtedly have had many failings and we have suffered enough for them—nevertheless we are a peaceful and friendly people, and some kind of common bond unites us wherever we may live in this wide continent. So whenever I thought of this Conference in session and I tried to think of other conferences elsewhere and compare the two, a certain hope and elation filled me that is not a thing of the moment that we are doing here—just a big show for a number of people who have come from abroad—but that there is something deeper behind it which will carry us not only in Asia but carry the message of Asia to other countries and continents. Do not imagine for a moment that I am speaking in any vainglorious way, talking about the message of Asia. I do think that every country and every continent has its own message. I am not trying to belittle the other continents, Europe or America, when I say that Asia has a message. Europe has a message and America too. We in Asia ought to have our eyes and ears open to those messages that come from Europe and America, but I would say at the same time that it is also time that Europe and America opened their eyes and ears to the message of Asia and the happenings here. I do believe that the message, the age-long message, of Asia has something of enormous value for humanity. It has something of value for modern civilisation in the West. I do not denounce the latter. In fact I want my own country to be industrialised. But in spite of its great advance there has been something strangely lacking in the West because of which it has come to this pass when with all the good things of the world before it, it has to think in terms of war.

It is an astonishing thing that any sensible person with the advant-

ages of science before him, when he can easily realise that the whole world can be a happy, prosperous and cooperative commonwealth, should believe in and think of wars, of hating, killing and wanting to suppress another. We might understand this in ignorant people but the curious thing is that the most learned, the most civilised, according to modern standards, indulge in phantasies of war and preparation for it. It is an extraordinary thing. We stand for the United Nations because therein lies some hope of world cooperation and world peace. Yet the United Nations have not functioned in an obviously united way. They have not set an example of peace and goodwill in their attempt to function together. I hope those are only the troubles of early beginnings which they will survive to lead us to a better and cooperative world. Therefore we support the United Nations But the point I was trying to bring to your notice is that this mighty civilisation of the West which has done so much to raise human standards, somehow occasionally has something which makes it sink to the level of the brute. Perhaps it may be that something of the essential spirit, the old wisdom of Asia, might help to remove the lack in Western civilisation; I do not know. I do think that in any event we of Asia should try first of all to hear our own message because we cannot carry a message to others unless we know it ourselves. During these past generations we have forgotten ourselves, what we were and what we are We have to find ourselves again and when we have done that others undoubtedly will find us also. We are now in this process and therefore others also are in the process of realising that Asia is not merely something on the map—a place for the rivalry of various imperialisms or a region where there are large markets to be exploited—but that it consists of human beings with dignity and a long past behind them, and who are going to have a big future. So in this sense we are always in a period of transition. The world is not a static place. Yet sometimes there are some landmarks which divide one era from another, and undoubtedly I think that all the delegates who have come from abroad will agree with me that this Conference has been such a landmark in the history of Asia. And because of that it is a landmark in the history of the world For a number of centuries Europe was the centre of history if I might say so, because it was the most dynamic, creative continent, and adventurous. What is happening today? Europe will continue of course as a highly cultured and highly civilised continent But it is obvious that the centre of events is shifting from Europe, that on one side it has shifted to America and on the other to Asia. We may not immediately see things happening, but obviously this long domination of Europe, ideological, geographical or whatever you may call it, is passing. In future, whether

in the arts of peace or in war, Asia is likely to play a big part. If there is going to be a war on a big scale, unfortunately Asia's part will be big. Asia is more likely to be the centre, if any war occurs, than Europe in future. So we are coming into this picture and it is up to us to realise first of all the part we have got to play and then to train ourselves for it. We cannot and we must not think in terms of a narrow and a purely nationalistic part, although inevitably the nations of Asia must advance along the lines of their nationalism. Today we are facing big problems and these cannot be solved by the mere nationalistic approach. Therefore we have to meet and confer together so that we may evolve common plans of action.

I have no doubt at all that your coming here has been a vast education to the Indian people. They will feel in a friendly way towards your countries, and I hope that in the same sense when you will go away from here, you will carry friendly memories not only of us the few whom you have met but of the people of India. Unfortunately the part of India you have seen most is New Delhi. Mahatma Gandhi was telling you that this is not India.<sup>4</sup> If you want to see India you have to go to her hundreds of villages and see her poverty. It is not a pleasant sight. Yet it is no good avoiding realities because they are unpleasant. That is India and the problem of India is the problem of her poverty. We are going to have political independence of course but if that independence has any meaning it must be used for the elimination and liquidation of that poverty.

I talk of poverty in India. But there are few Asian countries which are not cursed by poverty and the low standards. It is a common problem for all Asia and therefore one of the special things we have to undertake, wherever we go, is to tackle this problem of raising the standards of the people. I trust that the new organisation that we have started will help us in learning from each other's failures as well as each other's successes. The Provisional General Council of the Asian Relations Organisation has appealed or rather made a recommendation to all national units to start academies or schools for Asian studies. It is for you when you go back to give effect in so far as you can to this recommendation. I hope we in India will be able to take this matter up. I have appealed to my countrymen here to take it up quickly, because the burden is going to fall upon them if we are to have an academy of Asian studies. It is no good having something that is not good.

<sup>4</sup> Speaking at the closing plenary session Mahatma Gandhi said, "you friends have seen not the real India, you are not meeting in Conference in the midst of real India. See perhaps a few villages of India. Then you will find the real India."

enough Therefore we propose to have in this city of Delhi something that is really worth while for the study of Asian culture, languages and all other things pertaining to Asia. I hope that the people of Delhi specially and the people of India generally will see to it that we have an academy which will really be in the nature of a big university

Now, finally, you who have come from outside and you who live here read in the newspapers of the troubles we are having in India. We sometimes read in the newspapers of the troubles you are having in your countries. There is hardly a country which is devoid of trouble and conflict. Perhaps that is the legacy of this War. Perhaps it is an inevitable consequence of having to pass through this period of transition. What is happening in India is bad enough and those of us who have to shoulder responsibility for these find it a heavy enough burden. Yet do not imagine for a single instant, you who have come from abroad or you who live in this country, that this trouble and conflict is anything that frightens us. We are having trouble; we may have more trouble. But big things are happening in the world, in Asia and in India. When ancient empires are uprooted the ground shakes. Many things happen. You cannot have the birth of complete freedom without the labour pains that accompany every birth. So while we regret what is happening and we try to find a peaceful way of progressing, we also realise that sometimes it is inevitable that this kind of thing happens. We have to face it and try to conquer it as undoubtedly we shall, and you will, wherever you may come from. So I want you to face these difficulties and troubles in Asia as elsewhere with confidence in yourselves and in the future of your country and of Asia.

Now, I am going to bid you farewell and express the hope that you will carry away with you not only good memories of India, but a passionate determination to live up to the work we have undertaken today.

## 7. To Asaf Ali<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
7th April 1947

My dear Asaf Ali,

I have received a number of letters from you and I have read them with great interest. I am very sorry I have not been able to reply to them as I should have done, and as I wanted to do. But events have

1. J N Collection

moved fast here and I have lived in a kind of daze of overwork and a multitude of engagements.

We have just finished the Asian Conference. It was an amazing success from every point of view. I think we can definitely call it the beginning of a new era in Asian history. All those who came from the four corners of Asia felt the importance and significance of the occasion and went away duly impressed. Delhi did them well. India as a whole suddenly became conscious not only of all our neighbours but of Asia. We are all Asia conscious at present.

On the eve of the Asian Conference the new Viceroy arrived and began to tackle immediately the bundle of problems which awaited him. Mountbatten is able, intelligent, keen-witted and with capacity for quick action. I do not think we shall have to wait long before he acts. What he is going to do I do not know, but he has a strong sense of urgency and he certainly will not carry on vaguely and indefinitely as Wavell did.

Your demand for silver saltcellars, etc., was passed on by me to Aruna I hope she will deal with the matter. I am rather surprised at your referring to the furniture and other articles in the Embassy as being shoddy. Girija Shankar Bajpai is a man of great taste and he spent a lot of money. I am told he went to the best shops. It is hard to believe that he would tolerate any shoddiness. We shall try to send you such things as we can, but I do hope that you will not try to compete with others in pomp. We can neither afford it, nor is it suitable.

I enclose a copy of a letter received by Nan from Paul Robeson. I am myself sending Paul Robeson a brief message<sup>2</sup> for his meeting. You will notice that he expresses a desire for your presence at the meeting. Personally I do not see any objection to your accepting his invitation, or even speaking there. Of course you would have to speak in general terms, avoiding anything of a controversial nature or anything likely to offend American susceptibilities. But it is difficult for me to judge from here what the circumstances are and I leave it to you to decide what you should do in the circumstances. If for any reason you feel that you cannot or should not attend and speak, you could send a message of goodwill.

Aruna has met Lady Mountbatten and had a long talk with her. Each of them has succeeded in impressing the other; so, that is satisfactory.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. See *ante*, section 11 (II), item 4

8. To Abdur Rahman Azzam Bey<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
7th April 1947

My dear Azzam Pasha,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your letter of the 21st March which Mr. Taquiddeen el Solh Bey<sup>3</sup> presented to me on his arrival here.<sup>4</sup> I have had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Taquiddeen el Solh Bey several times and of discussing various matters with him. He will no doubt convey to you the purport of our conversations and will also give you his impressions of the Asian Conference.

This Conference has been a wonderful success and people from every part of Asia came to it and were full of enthusiasm for the idea of developing closer Asian relations. We met in open public sessions on some occasions and for the rest we had private plenary sessions and group meetings to discuss various topics. Naturally, we avoided controversial political issues, but there was a large ground which we could cover. It was astonishing to see the goodwill among all these representatives of the peoples of Asia.

We have formed an Asian Relations Organisation with a Provisional General Council. We have thus laid the foundations of something very big. We intend to proceed cautiously. The next full conference has been fixed in China in two years' time. Meanwhile, if necessary, we can have a special conference. In fact, Dr. Shahrir, Prime Minister of the Indonesian Republic, invited a regional conference of countries of South-East Asia to consider problems of their future. Probably, this will take place early in 1948.

1. J.N. Collection

2. Secretary-General, League of Arab States, Cairo.

3. He arrived on 24 March 1947 as an observer for the Arab League at the Asian Conference

4. Azzam Bey sent the following message "In the name of millions of Arabs, some independent and some still struggling for their political independence and cultural freedom, I salute this first great congress which demonstrates to the world the awakening of the people of Asia, so long held powerless to exert full moral and political influence in world affairs

We Arabs stretch out our hands in welcome to our brothers and sisters in the East. . ."

I am very glad that a distinguished representative of the Arab League could attend our Conference.<sup>5</sup> His presence was much appreciated and was very helpful. I would have liked to have fuller representation of the Arab States. I hope that will come. Further I hope that the Arab States will be able to form national units which can become affiliated to the Asian Conference and have their representatives on its General Council.

It is our intention in India to start an Academy of Asian studies where the language and the culture of Asia can be studied. This will ultimately be in the nature of a full-fledged university devoted to these particular studies. Naturally, the language and culture of the Arab countries will have to play a full part in this Academy.

As I have told you, at this Conference we avoided controversial political subjects as well as the consideration of the internal affairs of any country. In the Asian Relations Organisation also we propose to function in this way. Inevitably, some aspects of politics do come up for consideration and it is a little difficult to isolate them from the rest. We agree with you entirely that we should work for world peace, cooperation, equality of races and classes, and the right of man for freedom and national and human dignity.

As you know, we are passing through a period of rapid transition in India and we have to face numerous problems which are difficult and intricate. Nevertheless, we try to consider the Indian problem in its larger Asian and world context and we are greatly interested in developments in the Middle East, and more especially the Arab countries. The problem of Palestine has become of great importance not only intrinsically but also in its larger aspects. Our views are well known. Naturally, there is a great deal of sympathy for the Arabs and Indian public opinion has generally supported them throughout. This does not mean that we are in any sense anti-Jewish. Ever since the Nazi regime in Germany we have sympathised with the sufferings of the Jews and we have wished them well. But we have all along been convinced that any solution of the Palestine problem must have the approval and assent of the Arabs there. There can be no solution otherwise. We have thought in the past that if the British Power was removed from Palestine a solution might be easier. It would be an excellent example to set to the world to solve that problem by agreement between the parties concerned. Even a temporary arrangement would be helpful, as this will give time for passion to cool down. But, as I have stated above,

<sup>5</sup> Addressing the Conference on 24 March 1947, Solh Bey reiterated that the Arab League was "at the service of right and against oppression and colonisation," and that India's freedom was essential for their own freedom

Indian public opinion has all along been of the view that the Arab case is strong and that Arab approval is essential for any settlement.

I am happy that the British Army has withdrawn from Egypt<sup>6</sup> and that Egypt is functioning today as a completely independent nation. The sole problem that appears to remain is that of Sudan.<sup>7</sup> I am not competent to express any definite opinion about this problem, but it seems clear that the very life of Egypt depends upon the waters of the Nile and it is important that the control of these upper waters should not pass into hostile hands. I have no idea what the sentiment of the Sudanese is in this matter, but I am told that a very large part of the Sudanese desire some kind of union with Egypt. This again is a matter which the Egyptians and the Sudanese should settle without the interference of any outside authority. That settlement may perhaps be based on some kind of union between Egypt and Sudan with a large measure of autonomy for Sudan.

Not being fully acquainted with the intricacies of these questions, it would be improper for me to express any definite opinion without much fuller knowledge. But I have ventured to indicate above how my mind has been working. In any event in the modern world we cannot and should not think in terms of compulsion of any large group or territory; we should introduce an element of freedom, as far as possible, everywhere. At the same time, we must think in terms of close cooperation and not of isolation of small units.

I send you my greeting and good wishes and I hope I shall have the pleasure of meeting you again before very long.

Yours very sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. In accordance with the British Government's promise made on 7 May 1946 to withdraw all British land, sea and air forces from Egypt, the Cairo citadel was evacuated by British troops and handed over to the Egyptian army on 4 July 1946, the naval fortress of Ras el-Tin, Alexandria, was formally taken over by the Egyptian naval forces on 8 January 1947, the Mustafa Pasha barracks in Alexandria were evacuated on 9 February 1947 and the Kav-el-Nil barracks in Cairo were evacuated on 28 March 1947. This completed the withdrawal of all British troops from Cairo and the Nile delta.
7. The last British forces were evacuated in November 1955 and Sudan was declared independent in December 1955, opinion having swung against union with Egypt. The Republic of Sudan was proclaimed on 1 January 1956.

## 9. India will Move Forward<sup>1</sup>

I congratulate the volunteers who worked hard to make the Inter-Asian Conference a grand success. I firmly believe that all the delegates who attended the Conference must have been deeply impressed.

The Conference was a historic event for you and me, for India and for the whole of Asia. This was a memorable occasion. It was just a beginning, and I believe there will be many more of such conferences.

We are passing through critical times. Many big decisions have already taken place, and many will soon follow. Our country will soon be free and our flag will fly on important buildings. It is possible that you may have to pass through difficult times, but I can say with confidence that you will spend the rest of your life in a free and independent India.

The Conference has shown the shape of things to come. By holding such conferences a country gets an opportunity to see itself through its own and also through other people's eyes. We are proud of our achievements but sorry for our shortcomings. We will try our best to overcome our shortcomings. When nations make firm decisions, they move forward and none on earth can stop them from achieving their objectives.

<sup>1</sup> Address at a rally of men and women volunteers who had served in the Asian Relations Conference, New Delhi, 8 April 1947 *The Hindu*, 10 April 1947.

## 10. To the Maharaja of Nepal<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
15th April 1947

My dear Maharaja Sahib,

I hope you will forgive me for the delay in acknowledging receipt of your letter of the 9th March regarding the Asian Relations Conference. It was very good of you to send a cheque for Rs 10,000/- towards the expenses of this Conference and we are grateful for it.

It was a special pleasure to have your representatives at the Asian Conference Major General Bijaya Shamsher Jung Bahadur Rana

who led the delegates to the Conference took an important part in our deliberations and was subsequently made a member of the Provisional General Council of the new Asian Relations Organisation. The delegates from Nepal were very cooperative in our activities and helped us in our deliberations. They made many friends and I am sure their visit here at a time when representatives of all Asia were present was to the advantage both of Nepal and of other countries.

The Asian Conference was something much more than an ordinary conference. It was a gathering of friends and colleagues in a common endeavour, emphasising what you have referred to in your letter, namely, the brotherhood of Asia. All of us profited by this Conference and it broadened our outlook and helped us to look to the future with confidence. It was a historical occasion in which we were privileged to take part.

I must thank you for the very beautiful present which was given to me on your behalf. The embossed gold filigree work with the image of Vishnu at the centre is a thing of beauty and art which I shall value greatly.

I hope, and indeed I am confident, that the Asian Relations Organisation will have the full cooperation of Nepal in its future work.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,  
J. Nehru

## 11. To K.P.S. Menon<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
29th April 1947

My dear K.P.S.,

I have received your letters and read them with great interest.<sup>2</sup> You must forgive me for not writing to you in answer. But you will understand my difficulties and so I need not apologise.

2 The Asian Conference was indeed a remarkable success, far beyond our expectations. I think that all the delegates who came here from other countries were suitably impressed. The opening day's session was

1 J N Collection

2 Menon had reported the reactions of the Chinese delegation as well as his impressions of the ambassadors of the major Powers in Nanking

significant enough, but the last day's was quite overwhelming. And all this in spite of curfew in Old Delhi and petty riots going on. The enormous crowds that gathered were entirely middle-class. That was natural enough as the subject was of no great interest to the worker or the peasant. The Conference has left an abiding impression in India and made large numbers of people Asia conscious. It has broadened their horizon and made them feel that India is rapidly developing into a country which influences Asian and world politics. Many of our politicians, immersed in national affairs, have been forced to come out of their grooves of thought.

3. From the strictly practical point of view, the Conference did not achieve very much or, it is more correct to say, it has not achieved much so far. But there is an almost unanimous consensus of opinion that it has achieved much in some other way which is not easy to measure.

4. The position here is extraordinarily fluid, but some decisions are likely to be made very soon. Indeed we have arrived at a stage when decisions must be made whether they are liked or not. Mountbatten is a likable person and he evidently wants to get things moving. That is a pleasant change from the last Viceroy. Exactly which way they will move is not, however, quite clear.

5. The Constituent Assembly is meeting here again. We hope to finish the constitution-making by the end of October. It is quite possible that there might be some kind of a partition of some parts of India, but this will inevitably involve a division of the Punjab and Bengal. Inevitably also I think that there will have to be some common subjects in spite of partition. I have no doubt whatever that sooner or later India will have to function as a united country. Perhaps the best way to reach that stage is to go through some kind of a partition now.

6 Hydari has gone to Assam; Girija Shankar Bajpai is functioning as O.S D. in E.A D.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## INDIA AND WORLD AFFAIRS

## IV. General

## **1. French Policy in Vietnam<sup>1</sup>**

I suppose I must agree.<sup>2</sup> And yet I feel very uncomfortable about it because I am sure that this kind of thing will not be liked at all by large numbers of people in India. I do not like it myself. I hope that it will be made clear to the French authorities concerned that there is deep feeling in India on the Vietnam issue and anything that might be used against the Vietnamese will be deeply resented by the Indian people. We want to have friendly relations with the French Government and people; but we cannot forget that the present struggle in Indo-China is producing powerful reactions in India and, I have no doubt, in many other parts of Asia. I do hope that the French Government will put an end to the fighting there as soon as possible and arrive at a peaceful settlement.

1. Note, 5 February 1947. Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, File No 8-Eur/47, pp 20-21/notes, National Archives of India
- 2 The Defence Department had recommended a request from the French Government for permission to fly eleven transport aircraft over India with stop-overs. It was contended that these were not operational or combat aircraft

## **2. On the Use of Indian Troops Abroad<sup>1</sup>**

We have to bear in mind the strong feeling in India about the use of Indian troops abroad. The Defence Member refers to this and the matter has repeatedly been raised in the Legislative Assembly. Because of this we should not retain any troops in foreign countries unless there are imperative reasons for doing so.

In regard to the Middle East I agree that Indian troops be withdrawn.

<sup>1</sup> Note, 8 February 1947 External Affairs Department File No 23(8)-ME/47, pp 1-3, National Archives of India

Regarding Iraq<sup>2</sup> the situation has changed greatly and there is no particular danger of any disturbance near the oilfield. A possibility of new situation arising is of course always there, but one can hardly keep troops abroad to guard against future possibilities. That would mean an indefinite detention. I think we should suggest the retention of an adequate force to guard stores etc. only.

- 2 Wavell stated that about 16000 Indian troops were stationed in Iraq to "guard vital Indian interests in regard to oil supply and many Indian lives which were threatened" and thought that Nehru was probably worried about the Indian troops in Iraq "for fear of becoming involved with Russia"

### 3. To Sarat Chandra Bose<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
9 February 1947

My dear Sarat,

I have your letter dated 6th February addressed to all the Members of the Interim Government.<sup>2</sup> In this letter you have asked for facilities for sending a volunteer force and a medical mission to Indo-China in order to help the Vietnam Republic

I am not quite sure what facilities are possible because transport is difficult. But so far as the medical mission is concerned, we shall try to do what we can to facilitate its going to Vietnam. I shall inquire into this matter. But, as I have said above, the question of transport is a difficult one

Regarding the volunteer force, certain other difficulties arise even apart from transport. Normally fighting forces are not sent on behalf of Government or with the assistance of Government of another country. You will appreciate that this raises international issues. So long as the Government of India is not at war with another country, it cannot officially take aggressive action against it. We have publicly stated

1. J N. Collection

2 Sarat Chandra Bose said that India's freedom could be conceived only in the background of Asian freedom and sought to raise an Indian volunteer army to fight alongside the Vietnam Republican forces. He requested the Interim Government to grant passports and transport facilities to an initial group of about 200 volunteers and a medical mission.

our sympathy for Vietnam and insofar as we can help in the achievement of freedom by Vietnam, we shall do so. But, as I have said above, we have to observe the rules and decorum pertaining to international affairs.

Regarding the medical mission, I should like to have full particulars of names, qualifications etc. before I can make further inquiries here.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### **4. India and Burma<sup>1</sup>**

I seldom send messages to newspapers now, but I am taking this opportunity to send my good wishes to the Burmese people through the new daily, *The Rangoon Mirror*, that has recently started publication. Both India and Burma are going through severe labour pains on the eve of the birth of independence. It is interesting to compare the two and find out the similarities between them. This in itself is an earnest of what we have in common between us. We have to hold together and help each other not only in the present but in the future for which we are striving.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1 New Delhi, 9 February 1947 J N Papers, N M M L

#### **5. Telegram to V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>**

Your letter to Hon'ble Member dated 1st February regarding Italian representative's approach<sup>2</sup>

1 Sent by the External Affairs Department on 12 February 1947 Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, File No 13-EUR/47, p. 5/corr, National Archives of India

2 Krishna Menon reported that the representative in London of the Italian Government had extended to him an invitation to visit Italy as the special representative of the Government of India. He had also expressed the desire of his Government to establish diplomatic relations with India

2. There is no objection to your paying short informal visit to Italy purely as a gesture of goodwill, if it fits in with your itinerary. Hon'ble Member does not wish such visit to be made occasion for any suggestion from our side for establishment of direct diplomatic relations and if Italians themselves raise subject you should content yourself with saying that you will report to your Government.

## 6. A.C.N. Nambiar<sup>1</sup>

The Military Mission in Berlin say that it will be difficult for Nambiar to go to Switzerland unless the Government of India take action in the matter.<sup>2</sup> What action is suggested? We can certainly make it clear that we have no objection and indeed we would like him to be given facilities to go to Switzerland. Nambiar's past record, ever since Hitler came into power in 1932, was a consistently anti-Nazi one. He was put in prison by the Nazis, then turned out of Germany. He went to Prague but when the Nazis came there he was again turned out and went to Paris. When German armies came to Paris he retired to the south of France. It was after Subhas Bose appeared in Europe that he associated himself with his activities. Nambiar's reputation in the countries he lived in was always good and he was considered a very decent, straight and likable person. We might therefore facilitate his visit to Switzerland if this is at all possible.

- 1 Extract from a note dated 15 February 1947 External Affairs Department File No 21(21)-EUR/47, p 7/notes, National Archives of India
2. A C N Nambiar, who was under security restrictions in Germany, wished to go to Switzerland for personal reasons. The Indian Military Mission stated that without a recommendation from the Government of India the Swiss authorities might deny him entry.

## 7. Appointment of Agents in British Colonies<sup>1</sup>

Mr. President, may I, at this early stage of the debate, express the views of Government on this Resolution moved by the Honourable Member?<sup>2</sup> First of all, while I listened to his earnest plea for the Government of India to do something in this matter, it is obvious that this House must have known that he was speaking to the converted.<sup>3</sup> No plea was necessary, no amplification of that plea by details of what Indians were suffering from in these various parts of the world was necessary for us, and even less necessary was the pointing out of the necessity of our gaining contacts, maintaining them and promoting the interests of Indians in the distant colonies in the various parts of the world. Nevertheless, it is true, as the Honourable Member has pointed out,—and I think he has some justification for complaining—that not much has been done in the past. Although people in this House and in other places, both in the Government and those who are not in the Government, have always given expression to many very friendly sentiments in this matter, yet little has been done. Perhaps there is some justification for holding the Government to blame I cannot myself say. But there is one aspect of the question which I should like the Honourable Mover and the House to remember. It is all very well to say that the Government should do this and that with greater keenness and vigour. But all the keenness and vigour do not achieve results unless you are in a position to get them. It does not matter if you send one letter to His Majesty's Government in London about it or a hundred letters. A hundred letters will indicate that we have exhibited a hundred times the keenness and vigour shown in writing one letter. Nevertheless, even a hundred letters may fail if we are not strong enough to get what we want. It is not a question of just repeating that demand. One gets a little tired of repeating demands when they are not met. As a matter of fact, in this

1. Speech in the Council of State, 20 February 1947. *Council of State Debates, Official Report of the Twentyfirst Session of the Fourth Council of State*, Vol 1, pp 55-64
2. The resolution moved by H N Kunzru proposed steps to secure the appointment of Agents of the Government of India in Trinidad, British Guiana and Fiji, and to promote the cultural and economic interests of Indians living there
3. Kunzru said that he had moved almost the same resolution on 9 September 1937, and at that time had been assured that no efforts would be spared to secure the appointment of Agents wherever feasible. Despite this assurance, in none of the colonies had an Indian Agent been appointed

present instance, what the Honourable Member wants done in this Resolution, or much of it at any rate, was urged by us as long ago as the 27th November of last year, when we wrote at length to His Majesty's Government in regard to the appointment of Agents and we pressed them, as Government had pressed previously, that this was an urgent matter. We wanted to appoint Agents in all those places which the Honourable Member has mentioned in his Resolution as well as in many other places. So far as I know, no reply has come to that letter yet. We sent a telegram of reminder to them, after giving them plenty of time to think about it. The telegram was sent on the 28th January. No reply has come to that also. Possibly the matter has been referred to these various colonies and that takes time. The machinery of Government moves slowly in such matters as in many other matters and we are all a little helpless in this matter in spite of the keenness and vigour that we might show in it. The fact of the matter is that this is governed largely by other considerations, not by the letters and telegrams we send to the British Government but by the strong arm that India may possess at the moment. I hope the time may come—and that before long—when India's strong arm will extend to all her children wherever they may live in this world and protect and succour them there. We must recognise that it is not enough to rely on the good offices of others and to expect them to meet our wishes in the matter. Unless we are in a position to bring pressure, we can achieve nothing even with all the letters and telegrams. I hope that time may come I think that time is coming. We have seen, Sir, in a not exactly similar instance but nevertheless in a matter pertaining to Indians abroad, what India can do, in the last United Nations General Assembly. That was not merely a matter of Indians in South Africa. It affected vitally all Indians, everywhere outside India. It affected in fact not only Indians but many others outside who were suffering from disabilities in various other countries. So, in effect, the attitude we took up and the measure of success which we attained in the United Nations General Assembly goes to help Indians even in remote colonies, wherever they may be, in Fiji or Mauritius or Trinidad or British Guiana or other parts of the world.<sup>4</sup> In all such matters it is easy to enumerate various things that should be done, and undoubtedly they should be done. But it is always

<sup>4</sup> The Indian contention that the discriminatory racial treatment by the South African Government of Asians in general and Indians in particular constituted a denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms and was contrary to the U.N. Charter was upheld by the U.N. General Assembly which called upon the two Governments to settle their differences and report to the Assembly

a question of priorities what should be done first, that is to say, what, if done first, affects others. Otherwise your efforts are wasted. The first thing, if I may put it so, Sir, is therefore to attain power in India to do the other things abroad; secondly, to make it clear to people abroad that India resents any ill-treatment of Indians abroad and will not tolerate it. If she has not perhaps got the strength to protect them today, she will have it tomorrow. I do not mean that other things should not be done. They should be done. Everything that the Honourable Mover of this Resolution has said should be done. Nevertheless, our success in achieving results depends on other factors, not on merely sending a few books or a few teachers who possibly may not be well treated by the colonial Governments. We must have some strength to bring enough pressure to put on them so that they may feel that if they ill-treat our people, the results will not be good for them.

I think some of them know that now, not only because of developments in India but also because of developments in the United Nations General Assembly; they know that. I know, for instance, that at the United Nations General Assembly meeting some of the dominions of the British Commonwealth, who were not so guilty at all as South Africa in such matters, felt very uncomfortable at what was happening and they said that before India became a nuisance again they had better look after their own legislation in regard to Indians and remove any discrimination. There was that indirect or direct effect on them. So also the position of Indians elsewhere.

But having said this, and having accepted the Resolution and what the Honourable Member said in support of the Resolution, I should like to place before the House one or two other matters. There is a certain difficulty and it is going to increase in future over the question of nationality. We talk of Indians. What exactly do we mean by that? Is it in a legal sense or in cultural, racial or various other senses? Obviously, so far, legally we were all considered British subjects, whether in India or in other parts of the British Dominions. So legally the question did not arise. Today it has arisen as to whether a person is an Indian national or not. It arises in Ceylon, it arises in Burma, it arises everywhere, in the British Dominions, all over the place; and this question will have to be decided. That is to say, a definite definition of Indian nationality will have to be made, which will apply to India and wherever Indians are abroad. They will have to choose whether they are Indian nationals or they are not. They cannot have it both ways. Whether they are in Burma or Ceylon or Guiana or Fiji, they have to choose whether they will be Indian nationals with the rights of Indian nationals and the right to claim protection from India or

they will choose, remaining Indians of course, another nationality. An Indian in Burma, remaining an Indian, may choose to become a Burmese national. He may say "I am an Indian, but I choose to be a Burmese national," and thereupon he gets rights as a Burmese national, and he ceases to have rights as an Indian national in India. Though of course he will be culturally connected with India, he will remain so. We will help him culturally and otherwise. We may even help him in a sense in other directions; for the House will remember that in this matter Indians in South Africa are not exactly Indian nationals. In fact they are, Sir, South African nationals. Yet we went to their help and succeeded in a large measure. We did not claim them to be Indian nationals, but because of the discrimination against them, because of the ill-treatment given to them, we felt that certain humanitarian standards were involved, India's honour was involved; even though we did not consider them as Indian nationals in the strict sense of the word, yet we raised their question before the United Nations General Assembly. So in all these colonies these questions are going to arise in future, as to whether they are going to become nationals of self-governing colonies with a certain legal nationality pertaining to that colony or whether they would prefer to remain Indian nationals living abroad. Now, whenever in the past we have suggested, as we have frequently suggested, sending representatives of the Government of India to these colonial territories where large numbers of Indians live—and the House no doubt knows that in some of them the majority of people are Indians—always the Colonial Office has taken objection, they have procrastinated, delayed and ultimately prevented it. One of the reasons advanced was that if the Government of India takes too intimate an interest in these people, the process of assimilation of these people with the people of that island or territory will be stopped or checked, and racial conflicts may arise. Now, perhaps there is something in that argument, but very little, there is something in it of course. All these difficulties are bound to arise in future when every Indian has to decide whether he wants to be an Indian national or something else. No doubt these difficulties will arise in these islands, as they are bound to sooner or later, when they gain a large measure of self-government or complete freedom whether they can exist in that free state completely isolated from the rest of the world without attaching themselves to other bigger nations, and to what nations—all these questions will arise.

These questions do not arise on this Resolution, but I wish to place before the House certain wider aspects of this problem, because we are on the verge of considerable changes not only in this country but in the world. The whole British Commonwealth of Nations, the British Empire,

are undergoing a process of change and in this rapid process of change, all these questions are arising. Meanwhile it is obvious that we must do our utmost to succour and help Indians abroad in these colonies, even those who, as Pandit Kunzru pointed out, have practically lost all contact and touch with India. Many have been born there, many have not come here, some have been there for generations. I do not know how far many of these people ultimately will themselves care to have touch with India. That is for them to choose, but they must have the choice. They must know what India is. It is not right that they should sink gradually from the level of culture that they may have possessed to a lower level in these territories. So we ought to do our utmost not only to have our Agents there but to provide them with such cultural facilities as we can. The Honourable Mover mentioned books, libraries, scholarships, films, teachers, etc.<sup>5</sup> May I inform him that our Education Department is already considering the proposal which was made to them some time back of providing scholarships for Indians in these colonies to come to India to study and then to go back? Even previous to this, we had taken a decision that scholarships should be offered to Africans. This particular decision related to Africans in East Africa, not all over. In fact we had received a representation from a number of African organisations in East Africa in which they pointed out the difficulty in the way of their education there and asked for certain facilities; and we have promised to give them those facilities and a number of scholarships have been provided for these Africans. Immediately of course the thought arose when we are providing scholarships for Africans—which is right—why should we not provide scholarships for Indians abroad? That question has been taken up by the Education Department and I hope that this will result in young men and young women among Indians abroad in these far off places coming here and getting educated, because that surely will be the best way of promoting the cultural links by training their young men and young women and sending them back. Books are useful, but the best ambassador is a person who has been trained in India. About books too, we are thinking of as far as possible not merely sending books but doing something more substantial than that—of having a system of libraries helped and supported by Government here. How that should be done I am not quite clear. There are various ways of doing it—one, directly by Gov-

<sup>5</sup> Kunzru proposed to send English, Urdu and Hindi books on historical, political and cultural subjects to libraries in British Guiana, Fiji and Trinidad. He also suggested the appointment of Hindi and Urdu teachers, the exhibition of good Indian films and the provision of scholarships and educational facilities to people of Indian origin in these countries.

ernment, the other, encouraging non-official organisations to do it. The House may know that there is such a thing in England as the British Council, which is more or less a non-official organisation, though entirely supported by Government. The funds come from Government and it carries on British cultural propaganda by libraries, books, etc. in various parts of the world. It has done very good work from the British point of view. Now it is conceivable that we might have some such organisation functioning with the help of Government, functioning specially in these colonies and places abroad where Indians live.

Pandit Kunzru suggested films and artists going and various other similar things. I am afraid I cannot say anything about that matter. It is for our Information Department to consider it but *prima facie* I do think that one of the early steps, or one of the feasible steps at present, is going to be this question of sending artists from here. I think there are more important things that might be done first. Certainly if artists want to go we should facilitate their going, but the idea apparently that Government should organise visits of artists—that, I think, is not A1 priority. Many other things precede it and so far Government has not indulged in any such undertaking. But as regards films it might be possible. I do not know what the facilities there are and what arrangements can be made there. As a matter of fact, almost everything depends on the first step, that is the appointment of Agents there. Once they are there other steps can be taken through them. We can get information. I really feel ashamed at the lack of information which Government possesses about the conditions of Indians in these distant colonies. Sometimes questions are put in the Assembly, and I have no doubt here, asking for information and the kind of replies we give are not at all good, if I may say so. They relate sometimes to information which Government has received years back, they refer to some report, like Mr. Tyson's<sup>6</sup> report,<sup>7</sup> or something else. A whole war may have intervened and important changes may have taken place but our information is still pre-war. That is a scandalous state of affairs, I confess, and

6 John Dawson Tyson (1893-1976), entered Indian Civil Service 1920, Chief Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta, 1926-27; Secretary to Agent of Government of India in South Africa, 1927-29 and Acting Agent, 1930, Private Secretary to Governor of Bengal, 1930-35, Secretary, 1938 and 1945-47; officiated as Secretary to Government of India, Communications Department, 1939, Secretary to Government of India, Department of Education, Health and Lands, 1940-45.

7 In 1938 Tyson had informed the West Indies Royal Commission that under certain conditions the Government of India would like to have representatives in British Guiana. He had also pointed out the inadequacy of Indian teachers there and the need for building quarters for Indian workers.

I have felt ashamed to give those replies to those questions. Meanwhile, the only thing to be done is to pursue this matter of appointing Agents and because I thought there might be delay—and there is going to be delay—we suggested something else and that is sending immediately some kind of a Mission to go round these places and report on conditions there. Fortunately, many of these places have been visited, notably by the Honourable the Mover of this Resolution, and his visit has brought us into touch with them much more than any other communication might have done; so we thought that we might send such a Mission and we are still thinking of it and in fact we wrote about that also to His Majesty's Government in London and we await a reply. We go on waiting for replies and I am afraid until the position, the general overall position, changes sufficiently, nothing very much will be done. It is conceivable, of course, that we may send a Mission, it is conceivable that we may make one or two appointments, but the fact is that there are so many delays in the machinery of Government here and in Whitehall that it becomes very difficult to get a move on. But I do believe that in the near future probably we will succeed in getting that move on.

Another thing that Pandit Kunzru suggested was a steamship service.<sup>8</sup> That I would suggest is something entirely for the future. We have neither ships nor any other facilities for this and the question does not arise at all at the present moment. During the last year we have had enormous difficulties in the way of getting shipping for Indians coming back from Java or Sumatra or for the Haj pilgrimage. We could not get ships even for them. We could not charter them and now to suggest a regular steamship service is something entirely and absolutely beyond our capacity. If there is already any steamship service, well and good; but I imagine that it would be difficult for such a service to be arranged because of lack of shipping, apart from other facilities.

Pandit Kunzru has also suggested radio programmes. Well, all that I can tell him is that both in regard to films and Indian radio programmes the matter can be referred to the Information and Broadcasting Department. No doubt they will be interested, no doubt they do what they can but what they can do or cannot do, I cannot say.

There is one thing more which the Honourable the Mover suggested; that books should be sent. In regard to the books which should be sent I should like him and other Members of this House to help us by suggesting names of books. It would be helpful so that we may have a consensus of views as to the type of books that Members would like

<sup>8</sup> Kunzru suggested a regular steamship service between India and British Guiana, Trinidad and Fiji.

sent and we could make lists of the books available and gradually send them.

## 8. Advice to Indians in South Africa<sup>1</sup>

Nehru left decision of policy entirely to Indians in South Africa and made clear Government of India's inability to advise them. His personal opinion was against any overt demonstrations.<sup>2</sup> He did not advise or give personal opinion in favour of any participation, which should be decided by Indians in South Africa themselves in respect of particular functions or celebrations, having regard to local conditions and consistent with their self-respect

- 1 R.N Banerjee's telegram of 21 February 1947 to JW Meldrum, Secretary to the Indian High Commissioner in South Africa, directing him to convey Nehru's views to Yusuf Dadoo, Maulvi Cachalia and Nana Sita of the Passive Resistance Council who had enquired whether Nehru had advised participation of Indians in celebrations connected with the forthcoming royal visit to South Africa Ministry of External Affairs, File No 15-UR/47, National Archives of India
- 2 In a message sent to the Natal Indian Congress on 14 February 1947, Nehru had personally expressed himself against boycott of the royal visit as "any such action in present circumstances (was) likely to lead to complications and to clouding of main issue on which United Nations decided in favour of Indians"

## 9. To J.R. Jayewardene<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
27th February 1947

Dear friend,

I have just received your letter of the 20th February informing me that the Ceylon National Congress will celebrate "Independence Day" on March 2nd. May I send you, and through you to the people of Ceylon, our greetings on this occasion and our good wishes for the rapid realisation of the free Lanka of your dreams? I have no doubt that a free India and a free Lanka will have the closest of associations

1 J.N Papers, NMML

with each other for their mutual advantage and for the furtherance of peace and progress in Asia.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 10. On South Africa<sup>1</sup>

I agree that it is desirable to make some kind of an approach to the South African Government.<sup>2</sup> This could be made with reference to U.N.'s resolution on the subject indicating our desire to find a solution of the problem on the lines indicated and in conformity with the principles laid down in the U.N. Charter. If the South African Government is agreeable we could pursue this matter further.

2 I do not think there is any special virtue in the month of April or after. The King's visit<sup>3</sup> need not affect us or delay our approach. As a matter of fact, in any event the preliminaries will take a month or so

3 I do not think that Mr. Deshmukh, the High Commissioner, should be asked to return to South Africa for this purpose. This seems to me a definitely undesirable course. It is not difficult to send our communication to the South African Government through other channels—possibly through Mr. Meldrum<sup>4</sup>, our Agent there at present. If these preliminary negotiations bear fruit, then we can consider the return of the High Commissioner.

4. I think this matter should be placed before the Cabinet. A summary should be prepared. In addition to the above matters, the Cabinet should also consider the future of the High Commissioner's office

<sup>1</sup> Note, 4 March 1947 Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, File No 54-3/47-O SI, pp 7-8/n, National Archives of India

<sup>2</sup> It was in response to R N Banerjee's note of 4 March 1947 in which he had requested that in accordance with the resolution of UN General Assembly, India should also take initiative for fresh negotiations, and that permitting India's High Commissioner to return to South Africa would not counter the basic objective of her programme of retaliation

<sup>3</sup> The King, accompanied by the royal family, was on a visit to the Union of South Africa from 17 February to 7 April 1947.

<sup>4</sup> James White Meldrum (b 1908), joined ICS 1930, served in the Central Provinces, Secretary to High Commissioner for India in South Africa, December 1943.

## 11. American Attitude to Trade with South Africa<sup>1</sup>

The matter is no doubt delicate and we cannot hold out any suggestions of counter-measures if the United States do not fall in line with our policy.<sup>2</sup> It is better to proceed in a friendly way. Nevertheless the draft telegram might be stiffened and stress should be laid on our desire to prevent altogether any re-exports. Otherwise our policy at this end is affected and we may have to reconsider what quantity we should send to other countries. The word "informal" in the telegram might be left out. A certain latitude will inevitably have to be given to our embassy in dealing with this matter. They should report to us how their talks proceed

Mr. Merrell might be informed during his next interview or otherwise of the steps we are taking

I agree with Commonwealth Relations that it is not correct to describe our action as "unilateral."<sup>3</sup>

1 Note, 11 March 1947. Commonwealth Relations Department File No 19-3/46-O SI, pp. 14-20/notes, National Archives of India.

2 India had represented to the United States against re-export of gunny bags from that country to South Africa. The United States refused to cancel licences for export of jute bags which were issued before 1 October 1946; as regards sand bags, they maintained that these were surplus stocks received from the American War Assets Administration and their export to any country would automatically be approved

3 The Commonwealth Relations Department had queried an observation of the External Affairs Department that India had imposed economic sanctions against South Africa unilaterally. These had been imposed as a result of breach of treaty obligations towards the Government of India by the Union of South Africa, as embodied in the Cape Town Agreement of 1927 and the Joint Statement of 1932

## 12. To Aung San<sup>1</sup>

I understand that there is a proposal to revise composition of Rangoon

1. Message, dated 21 March 1947, sent through M A Rauf, Indian representative in Burma Ministry of External Affairs, File No 23/47-O S II, p. 13/corr., National Archives of India

Corporation by drastic reduction of number and proportion of Indian Councillors although Indians form more than half the population of Rangoon.<sup>2</sup> I hope no such step will be taken without fullest consideration of legitimate interests of Indians and consultation with us as I fear this will be regarded as unjust and discriminatory against Indians and will cause unfortunate repercussions in India. Grateful for reply.

- 2 The Indian representative in Rangoon had reported a move to reduce the Indian representation in the Rangoon Municipal Corporation by 75 per cent, thereby giving Burmans a statutory majority.

### 13. To Sudhir Ghosh<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
6 April 1947

My dear Sudhir,

I was rather taken aback by the announcement in the press of the formation of the Friends of India Committee in London.<sup>2</sup> The formation of such a committee is, of course, good. But I am doubtful of the advantage of officially sponsoring such a committee. Even the Congress avoided doing this because it felt that the value of such a committee is lessened by official backing. This applies much more so to the Government of India. The move may be misinterpreted and called a party move.

2. I spoke about this matter to Sardar Patel, and I am writing to Vellodi also. I do not suggest that what has been done should be undone. That would be difficult and might have undesirable consequences. But I do want you and others concerned to proceed very cautiously in this and other like matters.

3. So far as the personnel of the committee is concerned, it appears to be good and the idea of their meeting is also good. It is this official

1 Sudhir Ghosh Papers, N.M.M.L

2 Organised by Sudhir Ghosh in April 1947 with H N Brailsford as its Chairman. Arrangements were being made to enlarge the Committee and it was suggested that increased representation of the Conservative Party would include R A. Butler.

sponsoring that I do not like and I do not want any step you might take on behalf of the Government of India to be considered a party step or a step which gives rise to criticism among Indians in London or elsewhere. We are passing through a delicate and difficult phase of our existence and we have to be careful as to what we should do and how we should do it.

4 Sardar Patel showed me a letter you had written to him about the incident which took place when Mountbatten gave a kind of press conference I knew little about this except what I had seen in the press and a brief reference to it by Krishna Menon. All he told me was that some Indian journalists did not like being sermonised by you on that occasion He was not himself present and he did not know exactly what happened, nor did it have much importance. From your letter I have got to know the circumstances which explain a good deal The matter need not be pursued any further. But obviously you should develop friendly and cooperative relations with the Indian journalists in London and they should not be made to feel that a newcomer is not cooperating with them. Many of them are men of considerable experience in their own field and one should approach them tactfully so as to gain their goodwill and assistance

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**14. To M.K. Vellodi<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
6 April 1947

My dear Vellodi,

A few days ago I saw a press message to the effect that at the instance of Sudhir Ghosh a Friends of India Committee had been formed in London It is always good to have groups of friendly persons interested in India to consider our problems and try to understand them sympathetically Yet I was a little taken aback by this announcement chiefly because it had been officially sponsored on behalf of the Government of India The value of such a committee is greatly lessened when it becomes an officially sponsored committee

<sup>1</sup> J N Papers, N M M L

2. In the past even the Congress refrained from taking any such step and when we were asked to do some such thing our answer was that while we would welcome friends abroad organising themselves in this or in any other way, it would not be desirable for Congress to be formally associated with this kind of thing. Much less, therefore, is it desirable for the Government of India to be so associated. It would have been far better for it to be completely non-official.

3. The people who are mentioned as members of this Group are all good people and I like the idea of their meeting together to discuss India's problems. But I do feel that the way this has been done will diminish the value of such a Group. It will be considered to be a party move for party purposes. I do not know what the reactions among Indians in England are to this step.

4. As this step has already been taken, I do not quite know what should be done about it now except to allow things to remain where they are. The Group might continue to function. But I am writing to you chiefly to introduce an element of caution in all this work. We are at a very delicate stage in India at present and a false step may well have unfortunate consequences.

5. I hope you remember that I asked you to send food parcels on my behalf to Nambiar and other Indians in Germany. I should like this to be done from time to time entirely on my personal account. About Nambiar we have asked you to inform the Swiss Government that we would appreciate permission being given to him to go to Switzerland for his treatment. I am told that if a broad hint was given to the Swiss Government, they would agree to his entry.

6. Harishwar Dayal<sup>2</sup> is taking this letter. He will go to Geneva from London for his conference.<sup>3</sup> I have asked him to move in this matter of Nambiar if it is possible for him to do so. Perhaps you could help him in this and suggest to him what he should do.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

<sup>2</sup> (1915-1964), joined I.C.S. 1937, served in Bihar and Gujarat till 1944 and then in External Affairs Department and Ministry.

<sup>3</sup> The Geneva Conference scheduled for 8 April 1947 was to review, in the light of decisions reached by the participating governments, the proposals of the International Trade Organisation, as elaborated and revised at the London Conference, and conduct the proposed individual tariff negotiations.

15. To Sultan Shahrir<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
6 April 1947

My dear Shahrir,

Thank you for your letter of the 6th April regarding the air agreement between the Government of India and the Government of the Netherlands. I gather from this letter that you have no objection to this agreement in so far as it goes because of your Government's desire to improve existing transport facilities and to help in establishing speedy means of communications with other countries.

2. It is not quite clear what you mean by saying that you agree provided that the agreement is enforced only as a temporary measure.<sup>2</sup> The agreement itself lays down periods during which it will be applicable. As I understand it the agreement between the Government of India and the Netherlands Government in this particular matter affects you to the extent that the terminus is situated in Batavia. This terminus will apply both to the Dutch lines and any Indian lines that may go there. Otherwise there will be no flying over Indonesian territory. In the event of any extension of this agreement, which might involve flying over Indonesian territory, we recognise that a reference to your Government and their consent would be necessary.<sup>3</sup>

3. So far as the Government of India are concerned, we permit Dutch planes to fly across India on the service. It is entirely a matter between your Government and the Netherlands Government to determine under what conditions Dutch planes should fly over Indonesian territory.<sup>4</sup> It is understood that they will do so after obtaining your Government's consent.

1 External Affairs Department File No 11-EUR/47, pp 64-65/corr, National Archives of India.

2 Shahrir had written that although the agreement involved flights over Indonesian territory and thus affected Indonesian rights to some extent, he was prepared to waive all objections provided that the agreement was enforced only as a temporary measure.

3. Later, on 15 April 1947, Nehru clarified that the agreement did give the right to India to develop her air services to Indonesia.

4 Shahrir had said that Dutch flights should be confined to towns in Java and Sumatra and for any flights into Indonesian territory the Dutch would have to obtain the prior permission of the Republican Government. In return for these concessions Indonesian flights should be free from interference by Dutch authorities.

4. We are anxious not to infringe in any way the rights of your Government in this matter. The position, therefore, is this: we have no objection to the agreement between the Government of India and the Government of the Netherlands which permits flights either by Dutch planes or by Indian planes to Batavia which will be the terminus That is so far as the present agreement goes. If Indian planes in the future wish to fly inland into your Government's territory, they will have to obtain your consent. As regards Dutch planes flying inland over your Government's territory, this is a matter between your Government and the Netherlands Government to settle

5 In the event of any Indian airline intending to develop its services in Indonesia, we shall naturally refer the matter to your Government for their approval.

6 In view of what you have written to me, we propose to agree finally to the air agreement between the Government of India and the Netherlands Government.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## **16. Air Agreement with the Netherlands Government<sup>1</sup>**

I spoke about this matter to Dr. Shahrir, the Indonesian Prime Minister. Thereafter he sent me a letter which is attached. I gave him a reply, a copy of which is enclosed<sup>2</sup>

In effect, Dr. Shahrir agreed to our signing the agreement But he raised various points which really do not concern us directly and should be dealt with by the Indonesian Republic and the Netherlands Government.

I think it would be desirable to inform the Netherlands Consul-General in Delhi that we are prepared to sign the agreement, as we have now obtained Dr. Shahrir's approval to this being done. We might convey to him relevant parts of Dr. Shahrir's letter for his information,

1. Note to H Weightman, 7 April 1947 External Affairs Department File No 11-Eur/47, p 50/notes, National Archives of India

2 See the preceding item

more especially those dealing with certain difficulties which the Indonesian Republic is having with the Dutch authorities regarding the use of airfields, etc.

H.M. Communications should be informed of this.

## 17. Diplomatic Relations with Indonesia<sup>1</sup>

I have discussed this matter with Dr. Shahrir during his visit to Delhi. I also had a talk with some of the representatives of the Chinese Foreign Office who were present at the Asian Relations Conference. The Chinese Government were anxious to have direct diplomatic dealings with the Indonesian Republic, because there are a large number of Chinese in Indonesia and many questions have already arisen in regard to them which require clarification. I gather from the Chinese that they proposed to have a Consul-General accredited to the Indonesian Republic and that they intended informing the Netherlands Government of this. They do not propose to ask the permission of the Netherlands Government for it or their approval.

It is clear that there is a strong sentiment in India for the formal recognition of the Indonesian Republic and for exchange of diplomatic representatives. Apart from this sentiment there is also the urgent need of our having some representative there to deal with food and other questions which are constantly arising. In fact, someone on our behalf has been there during the last many months in order to deal with shipments of rice and other like matters. It is desirable that this arrangement should be put on a more permanent basis.

The Cheribon Agreement, as has been pointed out, is rather vague and liable to various interpretations<sup>2</sup>. We have no desire to have a

1 Note to the Foreign Secretary, 7 April 1947 Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, File No 281-FE/46, pp 17-18, National Archives of India

2 Article 15 of the Netherlands-Indonesian agreement, known as Cheribon agreement, which was concluded on 15 November 1946 at Linggadjati near Cheribon, indicated that legal steps were necessary to "adjust the constitutional and international position of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the new situation". It meant that in respect of international relations any change would await the legal preliminaries to the creation of the United States of Indonesia and of the Netherlands-Indonesian Union.

long argument with the Netherlands Government in regard to the interpretation of this Agreement, but there appears to be no reason why we should delay action because the Netherlands Government does not like us to deal with the Indonesian Republic. As a matter of fact, we have been dealing with the Indonesian Republic in the course of our rice transactions with them which are continuing.

I suggest, therefore, that as a consequence of the Cheribon Agreement we give *de facto* recognition to Indonesian Republic. We need not suggest any exchange of real diplomatic representatives at this stage, that is, the creation of an embassy or legation. But we should think immediately of appointing a consul at Jogjakarta, the capital of the Republic. I should like to have suggestions as to the manner of this appointment. If certain formalities have to be observed, it can be done formally through The Hague, but it should be made perfectly clear that the consul is appointed to deal directly with the Republic. I would prefer the direct appointment at Jogjakarta with information being sent to the Netherlands Government. This is the course the Chinese appear to be following.

## 18. Indian Prisoners in Indonesia<sup>1</sup>

Now that the Cheribon Agreement has been ratified<sup>2</sup> and the Indonesian Republic given *de facto* recognition,<sup>3</sup> the question of the Indian soldiers who joined the Indonesian struggle should be taken up. I discussed this matter with Dr. Shahrir, the Indonesian Prime Minister, and he emphasised the desirability of early steps being taken to repatriate these men. He made it quite clear that he would not like to hand them

1 Note, 7 April 1947. Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, File No 130-FEA/47, pp 5-6/n, National Archives of India

2 The agreement was approved by the Dutch States-General on 20 December 1946 and was formally signed on 25 March 1947 and a joint statement was issued on 29 March by both governments that the "realisation of Linggadjati" had put an end to the conflict between the Netherlands and the Indonesian Republic

3 On 31 March 1947 Attlee announced British *de facto* recognition of the Indonesian Republican Government similar to that accorded by the Dutch authorities.

over unless an assurance was given that there would be no punishment or discrimination of any kind.<sup>4</sup>

According to the information supplied by Mr. Panjabi there are about 730 men, including 200 in Sumatra. Dr. Shahrir seemed to think that there would not be more than 300, but his information was not accurate. Most of these people are anxious to return to India, though it is possible that a small number of them might choose to stay on in Indonesia.

It is clear that the case of these Indian soldiers who went over to the Indonesians during their struggle with the Dutch has to be treated as an exceptional one. It is purely political and in view of the widespread sympathy in India for the Indonesian struggle, when these soldiers were placed in a difficult and delicate position, it is not surprising that they shared the feelings in India and decided to throw in their lot with the Indonesians. Any attempt to punish them or discriminate against them would be resented in India and would be an affront to the Indonesian Republic.

I suggest that these papers might be referred to H M. Defence with the request that the Defence Department's views might be conveyed to us as to what steps should be taken now.

- 4 The Government of India decided not to punish those Indian soldiers who joined the Indonesians in their struggle against the Dutch; but they would be struck off the rolls of the Army from the date of their desertion, and would be given arrears of pay for the period they were on the rolls. No publicity should be given to them and they should be brought back to India in small parties.

## 19. India's Policy on Question of South Africa<sup>1</sup>

5 The Honourable Member is, therefore, of the opinion that we should not put too narrow an interpretation on the resolution adopted by the General Assembly, and that it is desirable to make some kind of an approach to the South African Government. This could be made with reference to the United Nations resolution on the subject indicating our desire to find a solution of the problem. We may offer our

1 Note to the Cabinet, 9 April 1947. Extracts Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations KW File No 54-3/47-O SI, National Archives of India Paragraphs 6 and 7 are the additions made by Nehru.

cooperation in implementing the resolution and ask South Africa to inform us what action they now propose to take. If the South African Government are agreeable we could pursue this matter further. If, however, they reject our overture then we shall be morally and tactically on strong ground before the United Nations at its next session

6. It is suggested that the approach should be two-fold.

- (1) a letter written to Field Marshal Smuts, the Prime Minister, informing him that the Government of India would gladly discuss this matter with the South African Union Government in order to implement the resolution of the U.N. General Assembly.
- (2) a letter to the Secretary-General of the U.N.O. intimating to him the Government of India's willingness to discuss this matter with the South African Government and asking for his help in implementing the resolution of the U.N. General Assembly.

7. Mr. Deshmukh, our High Commissioner in South Africa, still continues as such although he was called back from South Africa for consultation last year. It is for Cabinet to decide whether he should continue as High Commissioner or not. He has no work to do<sup>2</sup> and it would seem desirable for him to be formally relieved of this office. But this would mean a final break with South Africa and a winding up of our office there. In view of the fact that we intend to make an approach to South Africa, it might be considered better for Mr. Deshmukh to continue till we have exhausted the possibilities of this move

<sup>2</sup> This part of the sentence was replaced by R.N Banerjee with the words: "He is not on active duty"

## 20. Telegram to M.A. Rauf<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
14 April 1947

Your telegram No. 188 dated 12th April Burma Immigration Bill.<sup>2</sup>

1. Ministry of External Affairs, File No 18-2/47-O.S II. p 44-45/corr , National Archives of India.
- 2 Promulgated as an Act on 14 June 1947, it provided that no one could enter Burma without an entry permit issued by the controller of immigration or a valid passport with a visa or endorsed by or on behalf of the Governor of Burma

Our detailed reply was posted by air mail on 12th instant as intimated in our telegram of same date. Surely a few days more for such momentous legislation cannot do Burma any irreparable damage. Hope you will be able to persuade them to await our letter.

2 As regards detailed comments on provisions of Bill, following is substance of amendments urged by us—

(a) We take scheme of Bill to be that a Burman will be permitted to enter Burma without let or hindrance and that a non-Burman may or may not be allowed to enter at discretion of Immigration Controller. Core of Bill thus is definition of "Burman". Equity requires that new restrictions on immigration should not apply to Indians including Indian evacuees who have already been resident or have acquired interests in Burma. We must, therefore, oppose restriction on right of re-entry of such Indians. Such Indians may at most be asked to produce a re-entry permit and specific provision should be made that such permit should be given to them as matter of right.

(b) Definition of "evacuee" in clause 2 (g) should be amplified to include an Indian who having been resident in Burma left Burma before 1st January 1940 with intention to return but was prevented by war.

(c) As regards clause 3 of Bill as passport, permit, etc. is to be visaed or endorsed on behalf of Governor additional condition of immigration permit issued by Controller unnecessary and will cause undue hardship. This should be deleted.

(d) Clause 24 of Bill: Mere possession of Burma evacuee identity certificate issued by India Government in accordance with agreement of Burma Government should entitle Indian evacuee to re-enter Burma. Expression "duly endorsed by the Controller" should be deleted as contrary to spirit of clause 12 of Bill.

(e) Clause 31. We urge that scale of fees should be reasonable as passport fees ordinarily are and not prohibitive.

(f) Clause 7: Specific provision for inclusion of at least one Indian in Immigration Board should be made

3. Please emphasise that these are our first reactions to basic provisions of draft Bill. We see no justification for enacting Bill in precipitate manner and would urge strongly giving all parties concerned sufficient time for scrutinising scope and implications of Bill. Please make clear that our views on provisions of Bill are given without prejudice to our view that we are opposed to legislation at present and to our request for resumption of negotiations for agreement.

## 21. To Rammanohar Lohia<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
6 May 1947

My dear Rammanohar,

I spoke to you the other day about Nepal and the satyagraha that is going on there.<sup>2</sup> Since then I have had some further information from Kathmandu and I feel that the continuation of the satyagraha will be injurious from every point of view. I cannot obviously go into any details here and I can only suggest to you that steps should be taken to withdraw this satyagraha. If you feel that some kind of a reason has to be given for it, you are at perfect liberty to mention my name. That is to say that this step is being taken at my request.

The situation is much too complicated for it to be dealt with by this petty satyagraha which without achieving any substantial results might lead to widespread opposition and irritation which will come in the way of a step forward in the State. I hope, therefore, that you will agree with me and follow the course indicated above.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N M.M.L

2 See *ante*, section 11(I), item 38, fn 2

## 22. Scholarships for Overseas Students<sup>1</sup>

I like the idea but I am inclined to think that the scheme<sup>2</sup> is a little premature in view of imminent political changes in India. Before giving effect to it we might well wait for a few months. It is no good getting entangled in a new scheme when we have enough difficulties of our own.

I think a scheme of this kind should be given effect to in parts. The first part should obviously relate to Indians abroad.

1 Note, dated 12 May 1947, originally recorded on a file of the External Affairs Department Commonwealth Relations Department File No 55/8/47 OSI, Part I, p 21/notes, National Archives of India.

2. Not traceable

SELECTED WORKS OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

I am entirely opposed to the Indians getting less than the others From every point of view this must not happen.

I do not think we should give travelling allowances to Indians The so-called capitation charges are only necessary in particular cases.

**23. To Vallabhbhai Patel<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
13th May 1947

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Your letter of the 11th May about the Indians from New Zealand. We have been giving thought to this matter as we are anxious for them to return. We have also addressed the New Zealand Government to extend the period of their permits to stay abroad.

I am afraid it is not possible to transfer any of the Haj ships for this purpose. As a matter of fact, these ships are under repairs at present and are not ready. By the time they are ready, they will be required for Haj pilgrimage for which they have been specially built. As it is, we are very short of accommodation for the Haj pilgrimage and we are trying our best to get an extra ship for them.

Meanwhile we are arranging with the Defence Department to give us accommodation for New Zealand. We are also trying to make some other possible arrangement for persons to go to New Zealand.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal

1. *Sardar's Letters—Mostly Unknown* (Part Two Years 1947-'48), Post-Centenary Vol I (Ahmedabad, 1980), p 168

## 24. Message to Africans and Indians in Africa<sup>1</sup>

Standing as we do on the verge of independence and freedom in India, we send our good wishes to the people of Africa. In this long course of our struggle for freedom in India we have realised fully the value of that freedom not only for ourselves but for all others. We have stood therefore for the freedom of all people in Asia, Africa or elsewhere. Indeed the world can no longer be divided into part free and part unfree. Any such attempt will lead to trouble and frictions and wars. Peace can only be established on the basis of world-wide freedom.

The world has witnessed suffering and misery in every part of it, but perhaps the people of Africa have suffered and been exploited more than any other people. They deserve therefore not only the goodwill but the active help of others so that they might raise themselves and have the full benefit of freedom and progress. In this task it will be the privilege of India to help to the best of her ability.

As a gesture to this, and I am happy, that the Government of India have inaugurated a number of scholarships for African students in Indian universities. I hope this number will grow and the students who come here from Africa will not only learn something of India but teach us something of Africa. Thus closer relations will be established and mutual understanding will grow.

Indians who live in Africa must always remember that they are the guests of the Africans and that they may not do anything which might interfere with the progress of the Africans towards freedom. They must help Africans to attain their goal and cooperate with them in every way for their mutual advantage. We do not want any Indians to go abroad to exploit the people of any other country. We have suffered enough exploitation in our own country and we want to be rid of it not only here but everywhere.

We want to build up one world where freedom is universal and there is equality of opportunity between races and peoples.

I send my good wishes to the people of Africa and my fellow countrymen in Africa and I hope that in the difficult days to come they will cooperate together to realise the great ideals we have before us.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Sent on 15 May 1947 to James Beaultah Department of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations File No 23-18/47-OSI, p 3/corr. National Archives of India

## FOREIGN POSSESSIONS IN INDIA

## I. Goa

**1. To Rammanohar Lohia<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi

1 February 1947

My dear Rammanohar,

Your letter dated January 23rd was handed to me today. I am glad you have met Rashid Baig.<sup>2</sup> I think he has some reason for being rather cut up at my silence.<sup>3</sup> As a matter of fact I had not seen till very recently any of his reports except the first. I expressed my appreciation of the first report and this was conveyed to him. Subsequent reports came in a stream and as I was frightfully busy and for part of the time absent in England I did not see them. They were put up before me a few days ago and I am going through the file now. I find his reports very interesting and full of ideas. I shall try to follow up some of his suggestions, though it is difficult enough in our present state of confusion and inner conflict to do much. I am writing to him informally<sup>4</sup> and shall send a more formal letter soon.<sup>5</sup>

You will no doubt notice that important developments, for good or bad, are in the air. This will absorb much of my time and I do not quite know what the outcome will be.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection

2 M.R.A. Baig assumed charge as Consul for India in the Portuguese possessions on 11 November 1946

3 Lohia had written that Baig was "rather cut up" that he had submitted a series of reports but had received no word of encouragement

4 See the following item

5 See post, item 6

**2. To Rashid Ali Baig<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi

1 February 1947

My dear Rashid,

I must apologise to you for not writing to you earlier. I saw your first report and liked it very much. I asked my office to communicate my

1 J.N. Collection

appreciation of what you had done during the very first days of your stay in Goa.

After that I became so engrossed in other work, including the Congress and the visit to London, that I missed some of your reports. It was only about three or four days ago that I asked for the Goa file and I am now reading through all your reports and learning a great deal from them. I am afraid our office feel rather overwhelmed by your energy and the variety of subjects you deal with. You are doing an extraordinarily good job of work which, no doubt, will bear fruit.

I shall try to write to you officially or otherwise about some of the suggestions you have made. I want you to come here for a talk; but for some time I shall have no leisure at all. I think early in March might be a good time, but I shall let you know.

You will, no doubt, realise that we are facing grave problems here and rapid developments might take place. This prevents me from giving as much time to Goa and many other important matters as I would like to give. Nevertheless I shall try to find some time.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 3. The Future of Goa<sup>1</sup>

When Mr. Baig's first report dated 16th November came I read it with great interest. Since then five other reports appear to have come. I had not seen these previously and have only now had the chance to read them. I have found them very interesting and informative reading and it is obvious that our Consul is taking his duties very seriously. The reports have come at too frequent intervals and there is a mixture of issues in them which produce confusion and which might lead to many matters being overlooked. Nevertheless the reports are good in their own way. The Consul, in his eagerness to get things moving, has perhaps been incautious in some respects. He possesses, however, the far more essential qualities of ability, energy, and efficiency. He is keen on his work and sometimes this keenness takes him a little far. He is apt to come to quick conclusions which may or may not be wholly justified

<sup>1</sup> Note, 2 February 1947. Extracts Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, File No 27(12)-X/47, pp 19-22/notes, National Archives of India.

2. He has indulged in discussing personalities in his reports. To some extent this, I suppose, is necessary so that we may have the exact picture. But this reference to personalities should normally take place in private communications other than formal reports. The report itself should be a narrative of significant events for the period and should contain an appreciation of the current situation. Two reports a month are sufficient. About specific matters he should write separately whenever any action is needed or information has to be given. It will be easier to deal with such matters in this way, otherwise many suggestions may be overlooked in a mixed report.

3. The basic question to which the Consul repeatedly refers is the future of Goa. There is no doubt that Goa has to be unified to the rest of India some time or other. A free India is not going to accept foreign rule in any part of India. There is thus no difficulty about framing our basic demand or objective, but that does not mean that we should officially put this forward at this stage. We should bear it in mind and raise it at an international level at an appropriate time. One thing should, however, be clearly understood: that it is not our desire to compel the people of Goa to accept anything against their declared wishes. Unification again is rather a vague and loose word and there may be many methods of achieving it, leaving the people of Goa to enjoy a considerable measure of autonomy. On the other hand Goa may become a part of a neighbouring province. Linguistically it is allied to the Canarese-speaking area rather than Maharashtra.

4. The Consul has written a great deal and undertaken considerable research in regard to the position of the Catholic Church in Goa.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps he has somewhat exaggerated the political significance of the Catholic Church in Goa though I feel that there is a great deal of truth in what he has written. Portugal as a colonial Power is very weak and will hardly count, but with the backing of the Catholic Church it has a great deal of influence.

5. The Consul has suggested a divorce between the Portuguese State and the local church. He has referred to the concordat between the Holy See and Portugal according to which Portuguese are appointed Bishops

<sup>2</sup> Baig reported that the Portuguese State and the Goan Church "formed two halves of an integral whole" and any movement for unification with India was considered as anti-Catholic. For the movement to be successful, the support of the majority of both Catholics and Hindus was needed, a divorce between the foreign state and the local church was necessary and possible

in purely Indian districts such as Cochin and Mylapore and they are actually paid by the Portuguese Government. Also the Portugal Republic has to be consulted in regard to appointment of the Bishops in Mangalore, Quilon and Trichinopoly. The Archbishop of Bombay has to be alternatively Portuguese and British. The Portuguese Archbishop of Goa, that is the Patriarch of the East Indies, has jurisdiction over Poona, Belgaum, Mylapore and Cochin. All this is very extraordinary and obviously not in keeping with present political conditions and the spirit of the times.

6. A new concordat is suggested and it is proposed that the Government of India should approach the Holy See in regard to it. Some such step will have to be taken. I do not think there will be any great difficulty about it. So far as I know, Rome is anxious to deal with the Government of India directly. I had recently a proposal from the Apostolic Delegate<sup>3</sup> in Bangalore to the effect that he should move his headquarters to New Delhi and he wanted accommodation or land here Mr. Baig has made a similar suggestion in one of his reports. I think we should accept this proposal and give facilities for residence to the Apostolic Delegate in New Delhi, more or less on the diplomatic level although he is not yet a diplomat

7. It has also been suggested to me that we should exchange diplomats with the Holy See. Perhaps we shall have to do so at some stage or other as the Roman Catholics form a substantial part of the population of India and Rome's opinion counts in world affairs But this proposal is premature at present. The first step should be to encourage the Apostolic Delegate to come to Delhi and deal with him directly in regard to some of the matters mentioned in the Consul's report. This will involve some kind of a new concordat It is clear that the bar against Indians being Bishops in certain areas has to be removed and we cannot accept any Portuguese, as such, domination of the Catholic Church in South India We cannot agree to the Portuguese appointing and paying the Bishops in Indian districts.

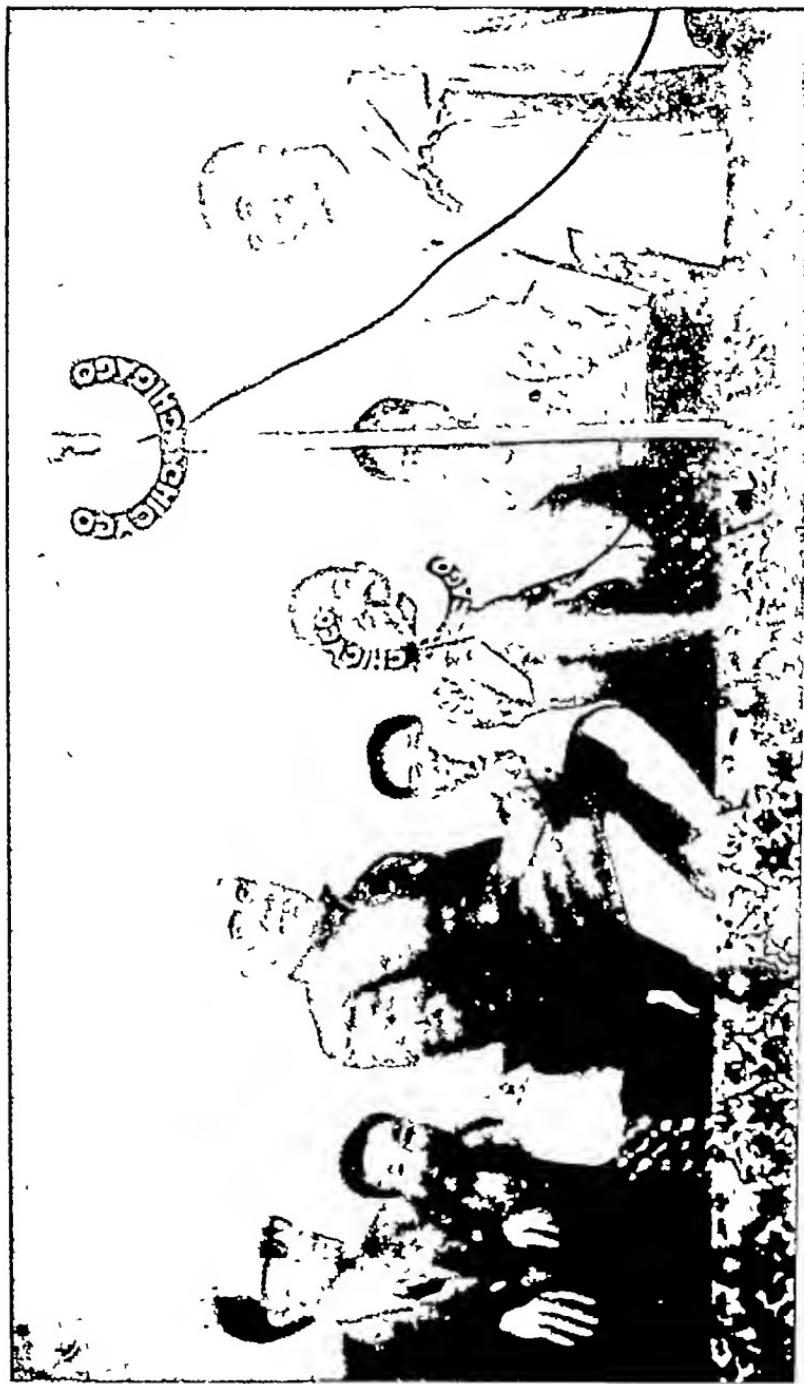
8 I have referred above to certain proposals made to me regarding the Apostolic Delegate These were made by the Rev. Jerome D'Souza,<sup>4</sup>

3 L.P Korkels

4 (1897-1977); joined the Society of Jesus in 1921; Principal, St Joseph's College, Trichinopoly, 1934 and of Loyola College, Madras, 1942-50, member of the Indian delegation to the UN General Assembly, 1949, 1951-52, 1955 and 1957; Assistant to the General of the Society of Jesus and Adviser on Asian Affairs in Rome, 1958-68



AT THE ASIAN RELATIONS CONFERENCE, NEW DELHI, APRIL 1947



AT THE ASIAN RELATIONS CONFERENCE, NEW DELHI, APRIL 1947

S.J., Principal, Loyola College, Nungambakkam, Madras, who came here as a member of the Constituent Assembly. It might be convenient to take up this matter through the Rev. D'Souza. He will be attending the meetings of the Constituent Assembly. If necessary a letter can be written to him on the subject so as to avoid delay.

9 The position of our Consul in Goa is a difficult and delicate one. He is naturally and rightly sympathetic with the movement for democratic and other reforms in the administration. He has to help the Indian community. He has to keep in view that ultimately Goa will become part of India. He has to keep in touch with the various movements going on. He has to protect Indian interests and at the same time to be friendly to the Goans. He has to be critical of the effete administration of Goa, he has to maintain the dignity of the Government of India. At the same time he must obviously avoid conflict or courtesy to the Portuguese Government in Goa and cannot ally himself to any movement directly aimed at subverting the Goan administration. This is a difficult balance to keep and requires a great deal of tact and forbearance.

10. There was some reference in one of his reports to official invitations being declined by him.<sup>5</sup> It appears that he did accept some invitations and declined others. It is not easy to give advice which may be applicable to all cases. Generally speaking, purely official functions of a formal nature might and should be attended. There may be special functions which it is not desirable to attend, such as celebration of the conquest of Goa by the Portuguese. Our Consul should exercise his discretion. On the whole he should be in favour of attending functions unless they have special significance which is contrary to Indian ideas or Indian interests.

11. The Consul should pay particular attention, as indeed he has done, to any courtesy or affront to the Government of India and should draw the attention of the Goanese administration to it. I am surprised to read what he has written about the remarks of Lt. Col Sinclair<sup>6</sup> or Mr. Kyte.<sup>7</sup> Strong exception must be taken to any such remarks or activities. It appears that Lt. Col Sinclair has left Goa and so nothing

<sup>5</sup> Baig reported that as the Governor-General had been discourteous, he intended to decline invitations to all functions which the Governor-General attended.

<sup>6 & 7</sup> British officials in the Indian Consulate who were hostile to the Interim Government in Delhi.

further need be done. These reported remarks, however, show how wrongly some Consuls and other officials were chosen in the past and how they misrepresented India and Indian interests.

12 I quite agree with the Consul that in foreign territories especially all representatives in whatever capacity should be Indians He has drawn attention to the case of Mr W.H Cullen, the local manager of the M. & S.M Railway and Mr. Keegan of the Burmah-Shell I do not know what we can do about Mr Keegan. But the Railway Department's attention might be drawn to Mr Cullen's case and the desirability of an Indian officer replacing him there.

13. There is a mention in the reports of gunny bags being exported from Goa to South Africa by apparently an Indian firm named Damodar Mangulji I hope this matter will be investigated and steps taken to put a stop to it.

#### **4. Portuguese Government in Goa<sup>1</sup>**

4 The question of our relations with the Portuguese Government in Goa is a difficult one and yet essentially it is simple. Our Consul has to maintain strictly correct relations and should not engage in a so-called subversive activity. In a formal sense he has to be friendly, but only in a formal sense Neither on the international plane nor in regard to India's interest in Goa can we or our Consul approve of or be friendly towards the activities of the Portuguese Government Portugal does not differ in any way in regard to its present Government from General Franco's Spanish Government International reactions to the present Spanish Government were obvious during the recent meeting of the U.N. General Assembly. Most of the nations have withdrawn their Ambassadors or Ministers from Madrid as a sign of protest against the

1. Note, 2 February 1947 Extracts Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, File No 27(12)-X/47, pp 29-33/notes, National Archives of India

fascist and illiberal character of the Spanish administration. Portugal at present is closely associated, both in its internal methods and otherwise, with the Spanish Government. Exactly the same criticism applies, therefore, to the Portuguese Government of Dr. Salazar.<sup>2</sup> The Indian reaction is even stronger because of the general policy of the Goan administration and recent happenings there. It is inevitable, therefore, that we should make our reactions perfectly clear to the Portuguese Government within the limits of diplomatic usage and decorum and that our behaviour should conform to these reactions. In the ordinary meaning of the word these reactions are not friendly. But our approach to the Government should always be a courteous one. Courtesy does not mean weakness or a suppression of our real feelings. It would be unfair to the Portuguese in Goa as it would be unfair to the Government of India, if we do not make the former realise what Indian feelings are in regard to their activities. A frank and straightforward approach is likely to lead to a truer appreciation of the situation and a better understanding of each other. The mere fact that we do not accept the Portuguese conception of their government and activities in Goa is itself a barrier between us. We cannot escape that fact. If any Portuguese talks slightly of the Government of India or of the Indian Consul, they should be made to realise that we resent this.

5 Dr. Lohia's movement and the statements he has issued undoubtedly create difficulties. Some of his activities and statements are not happily conceived and I would wish that he would refrain from such expressions of opinion. It is not easy for us to control his expressions or activities and we are not responsible for them. It would be desirable to discuss the matter with him and place our viewpoint before him. When I have a chance I propose to do so.

6 The Reforms Committee appointed by the Portuguese Government for Goa is not likely to lead to anything. Yet undoubtedly this move must have been influenced by recent events, and as such it indicates that the Goan administration is sensible to events. It does not matter very much what this Committee suggests and even if Goa becomes a province of Portugal, that does not mean that the matter is settled. It is for the people of Goa to take such action as they choose in regard to this.

<sup>2</sup> Antonio de Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970), President of the Council of Ministers from 1932 and dictator of Portugal.

7. The Consul's proposal that Indian nationality should be thrown open to Goans by a mere declaration does not appeal to me<sup>3</sup> This is not such a simple matter as he imagines. At the present moment it is not even clear what Indian nationality is. This question can only be raised and decided after the framing of the new constitution for India; so also our future policy in regard to Goa, though it is open to individuals to advocate any policy

8. I rather think that it is desirable to start some negotiations with the Apostolic Delegate in India regarding a new concordat I propose to write to the Rev. Jerome D'Souza on this subject.

9 I think that the proposal for the establishment of an Indian bank in Goa is worth exploring<sup>4</sup> This does not require any further information from our Consul The suggestion might be sent on to the Imperial Bank for their consideration It is a business proposition undoubtedly in the interest of India

11. The proposal to facilitate intercourse between Goa and India by removing the restrictions on motor traffic coming from Goa is worth consideration This might be referred to the appropriate Department. The Consul has reported that Captain D'Silva has been shipping or attempting to ship Indian gunny bags to South Africa via Portugal. If this is so, it is a serious matter and has to be inquired into and appropriate action taken. We have protested strongly to the Ceylonese Government about the export of gunny bags to South Africa and that Government have agreed to stop it completely If Captain D'Silva is found guilty of this act of smuggling, this fact will have to be brought out Obviously we must have some proof of it. If that proof is forthcoming the Ministry of Airways can be informed of it

3 Baig thought that such a move would enable a virtual plebiscite to be held

4 Baig thought the establishment of an Indian bank in Goa would have great political significance

5. To Jerome D'Souza<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
8th February 1947

Dear Father D'Souza,

While you were here you mentioned to me that the Apostolic Delegate wanted to change his headquarters from Bangalore to New Delhi and that he would like to have a building or a plot of land for the purpose. We should like to help him in this and to recommend to the appropriate Department of Government that some such arrangement be made. We should like to know, however, exactly what he requires and when he would like to have it. As you know, there is great housing difficulty in New Delhi and it is not an easy matter to get either a house or a plot of land.

2 If there is any possibility of the Apostolic Delegate coming to Delhi, I shall be glad to meet him and to discuss some matters which are of interest to both of us One of these matters relates to the peculiar arrangement whereunder only Portuguese are appointed as Bishops in purely Indian districts such as Cochin and Mylapore and they are paid by the Portuguese Government It appears also that the Portuguese Republic has to be consulted in regard to the appointments of Bishops of Mangalore, Quilon and Trichinopoly I understand also that the Archbishop of Bombay has to be alternatively Portuguese and British, and the Patriarch of the East Indies, i.e., the Archbishop of Goa, has jurisdiction over Poona, Belgaum, Dharwar, Mylapore and Cochin All this appears to me rather extraordinary as it is an extension of the Portuguese Republic's authority over considerable parts of India I do not understand this mixture of the spiritual domain of the Holy See with the political authority of a foreign government. You will realise, of course, that it is anomalous and irritating to have any rule or arrangement which keeps out Indians from any position of authority in preference to a foreigner This is neither good for India nor for the Catholic Church The association of the Catholic Church with a foreign political Power in India must necessarily produce confusion in people's minds and prejudice them in regard to the Church I am sure this cannot be the desire of the Holy See. At the time when this arrangement was made, there may or may not have been justification for it. But in present circumstances any such arrangement comes into direct conflict with Indian nationalism and aspirations.

<sup>1</sup> L/P & J/8/167, I O L R , London.

3. I do not know all the facts and perhaps you could enlighten me. But obviously it is time to reconsider old arrangements and find out a new basis which is more in keeping with present conditions and the spirit of the times

4 You must know that there has been considerable interest and excitement in India over recent developments in Goa. It has not been our intention to raise the question of the future of Goa at this stage. It should be the business of an independent India to discuss this matter in a friendly way with the Portuguese Government. But recent events are compelling us to consider this question in the present. I do not wish to write to you about the political aspect of this matter, but I find that this temporal domain is rather mixed up with the spiritual domain of the Catholic Church I should like the authority of the Church to rest on its own strength and appeal and not to be mixed up with political questions

5 These are some of the matters I should like to discuss with the Apostolic Delegate I am sure he will appreciate our point of view<sup>2</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2 The Apostolic Delegate met Nehru on 10 February 1947 and assured him that the Church wished to keep out of politics

## 6. To Rashid Ali Baig<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
14 February 1947

My dear Rashid,

I have just received your letter of the 10th February I have been intending writing to you more fully for some days After going through all your reports I wrote some long notes on the subject and asked my office to draft an official letter on the lines indicated They have taken longer over this than I expected This has been partly due to certain inquiries from other Departments which had to be made. Probably that letter will be sent to you soon

1 J.N Collection

2. Meanwhile I am writing again to tell you how very much I appreciate the excellent work you are doing. It may not bear immediate results, but I am sure of its value. The future of Goa must inevitably depend on what happens in India. I do not think we can either by your efforts or Lohia's make a radical change in Goa before India changes also. All we can do is to prepare ourselves and Goa for that change. That preparation is necessary, for nothing really happens automatically.

3. We are not, of course, afraid in any way of the Goan administration or even of Portugal. But inevitably we have to follow certain diplomatic forms. We should not officially ask the Portuguese Government to give up Goa. That would be an untimely demand now which we cannot enforce. A time for it will come later when India speaks with a clear voice and can follow up her speech with the necessary action.

4. I was attracted by your proposal to get in touch with the Apostolic Delegate and discuss the question of a new concordat. I wrote about it to a person intimately connected with the Apostolic Delegate. But before my letter could have reached, the Apostolic Delegate came to Delhi on some business or rather he was going to Lucknow for some ceremony and thought he might as well pay a visit to Delhi to see people. I had a fairly long talk with him about various matters. I told him that we would welcome his shifting his headquarters to Delhi and would help him to get land here. He hinted at the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Holy See. I said that this was desirable and would, no doubt, take place in due time, but for the present it seemed to me a little premature; we were busy with laying the foundations of our foreign service and getting into touch with foreign countries.

5. I spoke about the concordat. He agreed that something should be done but suggested that this could best be done when diplomatic relations were established. I referred to what was happening in Goa and pointed out that it was not good for religion to get mixed up with politics. This would have an adverse effect on the Roman Church in India. He agreed.

6. He expressed to me the full sympathy of the Catholic Church with our political objectives in India and hoped that the Catholic Church would have free play in a free India.

7. The Church of Rome is far-seeing and looks at things with an eye to the future. For many years past, in fact as early as 1930, I have had various approaches from high Roman priests about the future of

the Catholic Church in free India. They know what is coming and want to adapt themselves to it I think you will find them very accommodating on political issues

8. Meanwhile we might leave this matter here. I suppose the Apostolic Delegate will communicate with Rome and will let us know what the reactions there are.

9. I think it will be a good thing if you come here for consultations. You might fix a definite date after reference to E A.D. I am going to be pretty well occupied in the first week of March; but then this is normal.

10 Is your wife with you?

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 7. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
14th May 1947

Nan dear,

I enclose a letter<sup>2</sup> from Tendulkar and a letter addressed to you Why this was sent to me I do not know I am inclined to think that you should for the present keep away from this, partly because June is likely to be a heavy month for you and partly for other reasons. You can send them a message. If you do so, you should lay stress on the fact that the people of Goa themselves should have freedom to decide about their future. Immediately they should have full civil liberties. You may also say that while it is inevitable that Goa should become a part of the free Indian Union, this does not mean that Goa should lose individuality and cultural existence. In any event it is for the people of Goa to decide. It is not possible for India to be free and for India to be deprived of freedom.

Jawa.

1 File No 215-PS/46-PMS

2 Not available

FOREIGN POSSESSIONS IN INDIA  
II. Pondicherry

## 1. French Loges in India<sup>1</sup>

I agree.<sup>2</sup> The matter should be raised unofficially as suggested. It need not, however, be said that we do not intend to raise it officially. We shall wait for the outcome of the unofficial approach before deciding upon our future course of action. For the present only the loges should be discussed.<sup>3</sup>

1 Note, 23 April 1947 External Affairs Department File No 26(18)-X/47, p 8/notes, National Archives of India

2 The Department had asked for authorisation to suggest to the French Charge d'affaires informally that the French claims in loges in India, the former sites of French factories over which the French claimed sovereignty, had no justification in existing conditions and a voluntary surrender of these claims would contribute greatly to friendly relations between the two countries. This suggestion was made on the Orissa Government's proposal that the French loge in the district of Balasore should be incorporated with the province of Orissa as it was creating administrative problems.

3 Negotiations for the cession of these territories to India were initiated in 1945, without any appreciable progress

## 2. French Territories in India<sup>1</sup>

I discussed with the Governor the question of the loges. He agreed that there should be a settlement about them soon and in fact that reference had been made to Paris. They were of no particular use to France and they had a certain nuisance value to the rest of India as they might be used for smuggling or other purposes.

1 Record of Nehru's interview with M Barron, Governor of French India, and M. Henry-Paul Roux, French Charge d'Affaires in India, at New Delhi on 27 May 1947 File No 215-PS/46—PMS

2. About the customs union agreement<sup>2</sup> he said that there was no question of denunciation. They wanted the agreement to continue, but they desired certain minor modifications. I said that we would gladly discuss minor modifications but we thought that nothing should be done to weaken the administration and thereby possibly to enable a revival of smuggling He agreed.

3. The Governor spoke about the French Government's desire to develop cultural institutions in Pondicherry and a kind of a university. The idea was that this university should serve India by bringing French culture here and should serve France by bringing Indian history and culture to the French He added that the French Government wanted to know our reactions to this before they started on this scheme. He referred to political developments in India which would inevitably affect Pondicherry In Pondicherry there were two sentiments; the sentiment of India as a motherland to which they were attracted, and another sentiment of attachment to France as a result of many hundreds of years of union with France and French culture. While there was a desire for union with India, there was also a desire to continue this cultural attachment with France He suggested that Pondicherry (and presumably Chandernagore, etc ) might become parts of the Union of Free India, but at the same time there might be a kind of dual nationality for the people there so that they might be both citizens of the Indian Union and for some purposes citizens of France.

I said I appreciated what he had said about the dual sentiment among the people of Pondicherry. So far as we were concerned we naturally wanted a united India without any foreign bases or extra-territorial rights We would like French possessions in India to be absorbed in the Indian Union, not by compulsion but because we felt that the people there would naturally desire this to be done. We would like this to be left to the decision of the people. The other proposal about a dual nationality was a novel one which required full examination as to how far it was practicable We would certainly like Pondicherry with its long past of French culture to continue its cultural attachment to France. Possibly some means would be devised to maintain this or some similar connection, which would not come in the way of Pondicherry being a full member of the Indian Union.

<sup>2</sup> French India entered into a customs union with British India in 1941 whereby all goods exported from or imported into the ports of Pondicherry and Karaikal became liable to the same duties as were levied in British Indian ports

4. I further pointed out that a free India would be a federation of autonomous units. It was possible that even within a federating unit there might be smaller autonomous areas forming cultural or linguistic units. While we desired to maintain the unity of India and a strong Central Government, we were anxious not to come in the way of the variety of India and the cultural autonomy of its different regions.
5. On the whole Mon. Barron agreed with what I said. I reminded him of what he had stated on a previous occasion about the people of Pondicherry being free to join the Union of India if they so chose.
6. Indo-China: I mentioned to Mon. Roux the strong feeling in India in regard to the conflict going on in Indo-China. It was natural not only for Indians but for the people of other parts of Asia to dislike intensely the activities of a foreign Power to suppress the people of a colonial territory. Mon Roux said that he realised that there were these reactions. The whole affair was a deplorable one and he hoped that an armistice leading to some settlement would come soon. He pointed out that the Vietminh was only one party, though a strong party in Vietnam, and that Vietnam was only a part of Indo-China. I said that we were not concerned with any one party, but with the fact that the people of Indo-China should be left free to decide their own fate.

## THE ECONOMY

as possible. I am sure the Finance Member will welcome any brilliant suggestion that you might put before him

If you point out anything that can be done better or anything that is injurious to the country's cause, I am sure that will produce an effect on him and he will think about it and consider how he can find some way which, while it helps him to attain the end he has in view, does the least injury to any interests. Nobody wants to injure any interests. But the important thing is that it is entirely wrong if you imagine that this Government or any Member of this Government is out to injure industry. That will be a folly on our part. That is why I have laid so much stress before you on our desire for industrial growth and rise in production. We want to provide facilities for industry and facilities for production—technical, scientific, power resources and all that.

The whole conception is different. If we find we have committed a mistake we will rectify it. After all, in so far as this is a popular Government, it cannot function away from the people. It must react to popular will. What the popular will is it is difficult to find. But if I am a Member of the Government, obviously the moment I feel that I do not represent the popular will and am going contrary to that will, whether as a representative in the Assembly or outside, I have no longer any place left in the Government or in any office. That is obvious. But it is obvious also that this is a very difficult question before us. We have to balance so many factors and it is not an easy thing to find out immediately and clearly what is the 100 per cent right course to follow.

We have obviously a very big deficit to face.<sup>3</sup> We have, probably, very large further demands coming from the Pay Commission,<sup>4</sup> which will not only affect the Central Government but will have inevitable reactions on all governments in India. How is all this to be faced? It is a difficult matter we have to face. We can possibly shift the burden or try to shift it to the next generation or the next few years. This is rather a timid thing to do. It is better to face the burden today and accelerate progress rather than simply carry on and follow what might be considered today a popular and pleasing policy and yet which may involve a greater burden tomorrow. All these factors have to be considered. I am not expert enough to see the golden mean; I am merely

<sup>3</sup> The deficit for the year 1947-48 was Rs 48.46 crores as against Rs 45.28 crores in the preceding year.

<sup>4</sup> The Central Pay Commission, appointed on 10 May 1946, with S Varadachari as Chairman, recommended, in its report of 16 May 1947, a minimum basic salary of Rs 30 per month and a maximum salary of Rs 2000 per month, to be relaxed only in the case of a few selected posts.

placing before you various considerations that have to be borne in mind and, especially, I want you to appreciate that this Government or any government, whether we are there or not, functioning at the Centre cannot but have a policy of encouraging industry and production in every possible way and we are certainly going to follow that

As for the question of planning, the idea of planning as it has thus far been thought of and considered by many people—there may be many amongst this audience and even in the Government of India—is something that has nothing to do with planning. Planning means having some conception of the goal we are striving for, of the kind of society we are aiming at, trying to work up towards that end harmoniously and peacefully with as few upsets as possible, laying down targets so that on all sectors we may advance simultaneously. If we advance on one sector and do not advance on others, even that one sector will come to a stop, and we will face bottlenecks and difficulties. An attempt was made by the National Planning Committee to consider the problems in their entirety and even the partial work that the Planning Committee did has been very helpful in this respect. I hope that the Government of India will, before very long, also take steps in regard to planning in this way.

About four months ago, the Government appointed a provisional Advisory Planning Board<sup>5</sup> to just look at the things that had been done and produce some kind of a report to help us take the next step. The Board has submitted its report, which is likely to be considered more fully before very long.

The Government are pursuing numerous schemes of development at the present moment, some of them bigger in extent, at any rate, than the T.V.A. scheme. We have been held up by various difficulties but we want to go ahead. We want to produce cars in India, we want to produce power in India, because power is the basis of industry, and we want basic industries, without which we will always be dependent on others for our industrial growth.

When some of you gentlemen talk vaguely or definitely about the Government doing something which will crush industry, which will

<sup>5</sup> In the last week of October 1946, the Government of India decided to appoint an Advisory Planning Board under the chairmanship of K C Neogy to coordinate and improve plans for the development of the country. It was also to review the work done by official and non-official agencies and to make recommendations to the Government regarding objectives and priorities for future planning.

prevent industry from growing and new schemes being undertaken,<sup>6</sup> all this seems to me so very far removed from our conception of what industry must do. Why did we undertake all these big schemes and planning and all that unless we wanted industry to grow in a big way in India and not in a petty way as it has, more or less, so far done?

The whole policy of the Government, in so far as I can speak for the Government, is to encourage industrialisation of India, to encourage the use of India's manpower in every possible way. When I talk about industrialisation, for my part, I do not see any essential conflict between the development of cottage industries in India and industrialisation of India. If we want to use all our manpower, it is quite impossible for us to absorb it in big industries for a very long time to come; even if you have millions and millions coming into big industry, tens of millions will remain. Therefore there is no essential conflict, though there may be a little difficulty and overlapping which can be adjusted. Mahatma Gandhi has laid stress again, as he has often done, on using India's manpower to the best advantage. That ought to be axiomatic with us.

All this requires most careful planning. It should be remembered that economic factors do not recognise the limitations of boundaries. If we have the Damodar valley scheme,<sup>7</sup> it will affect at least two provinces—Bengal and Bihar. It is not a Bengal scheme or a Bihar scheme. If we have a river commission for the Ganga valley, it will affect three provinces I hope that we will have river commissions for our major rivers So when there is talk of planning of a particular type, it seems to me that we simply cannot do it. If we plan for the whole of India, the only right way to plan is to bring up the industrially backward parts so that there may be a balanced economy in all parts of India, not that a part of India should be industrialised and a part remain agricultural. That will be bad for India from every point of view, not only for the respective parts but for all. It is acknowledged from the defence point of view that industry should be spread out.

6 A Committee of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, in a press statement on 2 March 1947, said that the proposed 25 per cent tax on profits over Rs 1 lakh, the increase in the corporation tax and the tax on capital gains were bound to have serious effects and repercussions on the entire economic structure of the country.

7 At a conference of Bengal and Bihar Government representatives held at Calcutta on 23 August 1945 under the chairmanship of B R. Ambedkar, Labour Member of the Government of India, it was decided to embark on an extensive irrigation and hydro-electric scheme in the valley of Damodar river which rises in Bihar and, after flowing through Bengal, joins the Hooghly below Calcutta.

Of course, nobody is going to force down something against the will of a province; a province will have to agree to and carry out that plan, but if the conception of a plan is to become provincial, it will become ineffective.

In my address in Calcutta to the representatives of British commerce and industry in India I said that obviously India was changing rapidly, and was coming into her own, and that others from outside India would have to fit into the structure that was evolved in India.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless in future there is no reason why there should not be a place in India for industrialists and businessmen from outside, provided they fit into the picture we produce. Our structure will necessarily be based on considerations of India's progress, of the benefit of the hundreds of millions who inhabit India.

Within this scope I see a place for others also. Today I have the honour and privilege of addressing you, on whom inevitably a greater burden than you may have borne in the past is going to fall in regard to India's progress. And yet, much as I appreciate this honour, I feel a certain difficulty. The difficulty lies partly in the fact that I am a little embarrassed as a Member of the Government of India to speak to you about many matters that are before you and might interest you. Secondly, the difficulty lies in the situation itself. Because it is a very difficult situation from every point of view, whether political or commercial, but much more than all these from the economic point of view. I am no expert in financial and economic matters, though necessarily I have to try to understand them and I have to try to come to conclusions about them. Sometimes it has struck me that perhaps those who are not experts might understand a little more than the great experts. However, there is this advantage that I have tried and I do try to look at these problems always in their larger context.

At any time it is wrong to isolate a problem, much more so today when the problems are interlocked, interrelated and overlapping. And yet, when you come to think of the problems of India immediately you run into other problems, international and world problems.

As for the recent statement made by the British Prime Minister in regard to the imminent withdrawal of the British Power from India, obviously, that statement, or rather the facts which made that statement inevitable, made many people, who had been moving in small grooves and not paying attention to these major factors, sit up. The fact is that behind that statement, generous as it is because it is certainly a brave

<sup>8</sup> See *Selected Works* (Second Series), Vol. 1, pp. 419-429.

act to recognise facts occasionally and many people try to avoid recognising the most obvious facts, there is a certain dynamic quality about the Indian situation, whether you consider it political or economic, which cannot be ignored and which cannot be stopped. India is going ahead, and in spite of all manner of setbacks you cannot stop India. On the political side of it, the British Government recognise that, and we must appreciate their wisdom and courage in doing so. But the fact remains, and from that fact flows the other fact, that India, as she is situated geographically and economically, is going to be the centre of Asia. India inevitably becomes in a sense a hub of the future working of western, southern and south-eastern Asia. We cannot escape that. It is inevitable and we have to live up to it.

Recently Dr. Evatt, the eminent Foreign Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia, delivered a speech in which he referred to South-East Asian problems, in which he realised that it was necessary and essential to have cooperation between the countries of South-East Asia for the solution of Pacific problems, in which he thought that the co-operation of India was also essential and he invited India for that co-operation.<sup>9</sup> That was a wise speech of Dr. Evatt, and the general policy that the Australian Commonwealth has been following in regard to foreign policy has been a wise policy because it is thinking in realistic terms of the present; it is thinking of these areas which are tied together. Whatever their political differences may be they have to go together. Thus it may be—in fact, I think, it is bound to happen—that as we progress more we shall have to consider, in common with these other countries to the east, south-east and south-west, common policies and develop common lines of action, because the economic factor and even the defence factor override these political boundaries and other considerations.

So thinking of the problem of today in this larger context of India playing this important role all over Asia and in world affairs, we are only going to play that role, obviously if we make good in our own country. If we do not, then others will play that role and we shall waste many years in mutual controversy and conflict.

<sup>9</sup> Speaking in the Australian House of Representatives on 26 February 1947, Herbert Evatt said that Australia looked forward to India achieving complete freedom and autonomy similar to her own. He added that according to present indications the time had now come for forming in the South-East Asia and Western Pacific region an appropriate regional instrumentality concerned with the interests of all the peoples of this area.

Possibly the most important and immediate problem today in India is to add to our output. It seems to me that almost everything depends on adding to our production. If we do not add to it, we cannot even begin solving our problems. We have vast schemes for dams, reservoirs, irrigations, hydro-electric works, scientific research and technical institutions and educational progress etc.

All these schemes are meant ultimately to help in the production of wealth in India, the production of a better type of human being and more wealth. All these schemes require resources. Where are they to come from? Ultimately we must depend upon our capacity to produce wealth in this country.

Even though production is the most important thing at the moment, far too much stress was laid on production in the past, it being thought that distribution would look after itself. Distribution will not look after itself, in future, if there is no proper distribution and no proper social justice, there are going to be conflicts on an enormous scale. Therefore distribution must be taken in hand and considered as a highly important factor. Nevertheless, I do say that production is the first thing today.

We have on the one hand demands, and generally speaking they are just, fair and right demands, from labour for a higher standard of living, for higher wages *et cetera*. Examined separately there are very few persons who can say "no" to them or should say "no" to them. We want these higher standards. Yet, obviously, we can only get the standards for which we can pay. We cannot create standards out of nothing and if we have not got enough, we simply cannot pay for them; a slow paralysis creeps into our structure and we are liable to get into a vicious circle. Justifiable demands for wages lead to strikes, strikes lead to loss of production and less capacity to pay and so although, perhaps, for the moment higher wages may be granted, the capacity to pay higher wages becomes lesser and lesser.

We are facing a coal crisis<sup>10</sup>. Though we are not facing a crisis similar to that in England, nevertheless the coal position is very difficult. The result of all this is that the capacity to produce has become infinitely less and the capacity to earn profits or pay wages has disappeared. So it is about time that all of us think about this question funda-

<sup>10</sup> J. Eaton Griffith, Chairman of the European Coal Organisation, said that stoppage of export from Britain and diminished supplies from Germany had caused an extremely critical situation in Europe whereas in India shortage of wagons, labour troubles and communal riots had severely affected the supply of coal.

mentally—profits, dividends and wages should not be considered separately because this individual and separatist thinking in compartments is likely to cause injury to all. I hope that it might be possible for representatives of labour, industry, Government and others concerned to meet together informally and have frank talks and try to find a way out and avoid any step being taken which may be injurious to all. Obviously, not only we in India but people all over the world are passing through a period of transition. When we are in such a period, we cannot think on static lines. Nor is it safe to think entirely on idealistic lines. One has to combine idealism with the practical aspect and to proceed by the method ultimately of trial and error.

The ultimate objective can only be the well-being of the 400 millions of India. Nobody wants any group or class to suffer, but if there is conflict between the interests of one group and the larger community, obviously the interests of the larger community must prevail.

The British white paper on the economic situation in England<sup>11</sup> is a brave paper because it frankly puts the difficulties before the people of England and suggests certain ways of meeting them, and the ways are full of privation. The problem before us, as before the British Government, is that there are so many important things to be done. We realise that they are important but the question is which should be done first and immediately. We are full of long-term plans, but how are we to even think of long-term plans when starvation is facing millions of our people. We have to meet that at any cost. We talk, quite rightly, about a five-year plan for agriculture. But the point is that if you do not get moving today, during these five years a few tens of millions of our people may die of starvation. So we have to import food and we have to pay for it, and we are in fact made to pay through the nose for the food we import. It is unfortunate that other people take advantage of our need.

I appeal to you to consider the situation in India, the future of industry and commerce in the country, in this wider context and then discuss them with the Government and others so that somehow out of our joint wisdom some course may be evolved which may be good for this country.

11. The *Economic Survey for 1947*, issued by the British Government on 22 February 1947, set forth in detail the problems of coal and power, adverse balance of payments and insufficient labour force, and called upon the British people for a great constructive effort to increase national production.

### 3. Industrial Growth and Social Justice<sup>1</sup>

I appeal to all the industrialists of India to consider industrialization in the context of the appalling poverty of the people. Of course, we all want industrial progress, but only of the kind which would benefit the 400 million Indians and not a few industrialists and capitalists.

Raising the standard of living of the masses must be the first priority in any scheme of industrial advancement and not a subsidiary benefit that may follow from industrial reconstruction.

We know all about the pitiable condition of our people. It is no use repeating all that. The time has come for positive action. We must decide what we are going to do today, tomorrow and the day after.

There are some people who always moan about India's present condition and compare the country unfavourably with the countries of the West. I do not like this tendency. Where is the point in moaning about ourselves? I am proud and not ashamed of the respect India has won for herself in so short a time.

Let us not bemoan our lot. See what happened at the Asian Conference. Did we function there as a down-and-out nation? Where is the question of our bemoaning? I looked round with pride at all those countries which were represented, including those which are great industrial countries. I am going to copy from them because I know they have much to teach us. We shall learn everything they have got to teach us.

The fact that foreign countries are taking so much notice of India although she is not yet politically independent is an index of what future India is going to be like.

We function more and more not only as an independent country but in a sense as a leading country in the world. Every man with the least foresight knows what India of tomorrow is going to be. India of tomorrow will be not merely politically a powerful country but industrially a progressive country.

We all blame others for our lot but let us not cast the blame any further. That is why we have struggled all these years. Essentially no good can come without political freedom and all other freedoms flow

<sup>1</sup> Inaugural address at the seventh annual session of the All India Manufacturers Conference, New Delhi, 14 April 1947. From *The Hindustan Times*, 15 April 1947.

out of political freedom That political freedom was denied to us but now it is coming. Now that we are on the verge of political freedom we shall run and bounce towards economic freedom. What type it will be or what kind it will be it is not easy for me to say. It is right that we must give full thought to it because it is a question of 400 million people.

I do not want industrial development if 400 million people are going to remain in a bad way. Progress must bring progress to all the people and not to a few chosen We have to think in terms of the masses of this country Their standard of living must be raised. The industrial progress and the prosperity of the 400 million people, and not merely of a ten or a hundred thousand people, are interrelated The position today in the U.K. and U.S.A. is the product of 200 years of industrial growth. They passed through various phases and there was a frightful abuse in the factories and elsewhere of the industrial revolution as regards the first generation or two Are we going to cover that frightful abuse and must it be repeated?

Nonetheless, we must cover in five or ten years what other countries took generations to do and at the same time carry millions with us, not by compulsion or in an authoritarian way but with their consent. It has been suggested that the Government should make clear its economic policy. While I agree it is high time that the Government clarify this position, I hope not before long this will be done I cannot fix a date because we are in a peculiar stage of transition and crisis and hundreds of problems face us which have to be solved just now. It is extremely difficult to do hundreds of things at the same time We shall face them and solve them.

The labour problem is not an exclusively Indian phenomenon It is much more so in America and England We are passing through a certain phase after the War and possibly we are passing through it because the old economic foundation is not suitable for the modern world. If you in India are going to think in terms of an out-of-date economy and try to build up a structure just thinking of what took place in the U.S.A. or U.K. in the previous ages, you will be out of date and building on shifting sands In fact, production and economic growth must be based on social contentment Without that there is no great future for India

The President, Sir M Visvesvaraya, has said that the public is anxious to know what the Government's policy is in regard to nationalization No doubt, an overwhelming majority of the people passionately desire nationalization—may be without knowing it or analysing it. Why do they want it? So when one talks of "public" one should

beware of what public one refers to. The public criticizes manufacturers and industrialists and says that in the course of the War a number of people made vast sums of money legitimately and illegitimately, probably both. The War accentuated the contrast between the rich and poor greatly. In considering the question one should take into account the feelings and urges of millions of people. The millions must be carried; otherwise even the best of schemes will simply collapse.

While I cannot bind down the Government to what I say in regard to nationalisation, I ask you to consider the question from the point of view of the masses. The general viewpoint expressed at the conference is that the Government must help industries in every way by tariffs and finance and other means. At the same time, the Government must keep away and not interfere but just provide the sinews of industries. It is not a logical position to take up. I might inform you that the Government is going to do no such thing. But what the Government is going to do I do not know. The Government is anxious that India should produce more wealth and raise the standard of the people by developing all industries, small, big and cottage, and wants to utilize every individual for efficient production. The question is how to achieve it. Supposing relations between employers and employees are so bad that there is continued industrial trouble, then we cannot get moving. One may compromise here and there, but if the whole background is bad then the production will be hampered. We will have to find some way for cooperative working and achieve some measure of adjustment on both sides.

The public must be convinced and carried along in giving effect to any plan, though it is a difficult task. It is difficult because the public has little vision and it does not look ahead. It recognizes only the troubles of the day. The question of nationalization should, of course, be discussed in a practical way and not in a theoretical sense. In fact, if the question is looked at from a practical point of view it is not easy to say yes or no to it. It has to be discussed in the context of today and not in an idealistic context. Ultimately, it is a question of our capacity as well. I have no doubt in my mind that in theory complete nationalization is desirable but in practice what and when we will do it is another matter. At the present moment we have to consider what is the best way to get over the present economic difficulty and not indulge in schemes which may obstruct and delay progress during a very vital period of our existence.

When one talks of planning obviously there should be some kind of Governmental agency to control. That control may be hundred per cent in regard to certain industries and ten per cent in regard to others,

but, all the same, some measure of control is bound to come if there is to be any planned economy.

In the present stage there will have to be inevitably a great deal of private enterprise. I do not want to interfere with them. But if you are going to plan even these private enterprises must function within that plan.

There is a paucity of trained manpower in the country, so the Government has decided to set up a committee which will perhaps be called the scientific manpower committee to consider this particular point. The committee will investigate the question taking into account the available scientific personnel and technicians and where necessary send them overseas for further training and ensure that no scientific talent is wasted. There is plenty of talent in India. In fact, India is full of scientific and technical talent, but they need an opportunity for training.

I would like to know what the industrialists themselves have done in regard to scientific research. I think their record is astonishingly and shamefully poor. We have got a habit here always of relying on the Government. We look to the Government for everything except to be taxed heavily.

I do recognize that there are some industrial organizations in India which have encouraged scientific research, but as a whole very little has been done by the industrialists and they should do far more. The Government is, however, keenly conscious of the necessity of scientific research.

You are aware of the strike in the coalfields at Jharia. I appeal both to you and to labour to save the situation. My own memories of Jharia are rather distant. I have had in my life some ghastly experiences but none can compare with my visit to the coal-miners. I had the shock of my life at the prevailing conditions of work. For my part nothing in the world will make me work there. I can quite understand and appreciate the feelings among workers for better conditions in every way. I do not know what changes have taken place in recent years. On the other hand, I came to know that in the Jharia coalfields a strike has taken place, and that it is really endangering the coalfields and there may be fires and water may come in and life may be endangered. I cannot help feeling that the workers have taken upon themselves a very heavy responsibility. I do not know whether the strike is justified or not. But whatever it may be nobody is entitled to endanger the lives of the workers and sabotage the coal-mines by any kind of action. It is really against the whole community. We have got in the coalfields a proper Governmental procedure to deal with disputes and certainly no one can say it is a partial procedure. I appeal to you to maintain industrial peace in the coalfields.

#### 4. To Westmore Willcox<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
29th April 1947

My dear Willcox,

I must apologise to you for the great delay in answering your letter of February 19th. The delay is partly due to the fact that I wished to consult some of my colleagues in regard to the suggestions you have made.

2. One of the important matters before us is to lay down our policy in regard to foreign investments in India. I hope we shall do so before very long. For the present, however, we are tied up with important and urgent problems at home. Till we lay down our general policy about foreign investments in India, it is a little difficult for me to answer some of your questions. But I may indicate to you the general lines of our thought. We are anxious to industrialise India as rapidly as possible. We would gladly welcome help from abroad in this process. But we are equally anxious to prevent any foreign control of Indian industry. Naturally if foreign industrialists invest in India in money, brains or technique, they will require to be recompensed adequately. That we fully realise. But where there is any question of control by foreign interests, there is likely to be great opposition in India. Because of this I fear we cannot give the assurances and guarantees that you suggest.<sup>2</sup> Indeed none of us can bind down the future of India during such a changing period of her history. The ultimate decisions will be made by those who control free India and the forces behind them.

1 J N. Collection.

2. Westmore Willcox suggested that the Indian Government should offer extremely liberal terms to American industrialists to start industries in India. One guarantee suggested was a 20-year ban on nationalisation of American companies and, if it had to be done, to buy out the American shareholders at a price reflecting the value of their holdings by application of a formula determined by the foreign company.

3. Such agreements as we come to, we shall, of course, honour. But it will be quite impossible for us to agree to public utilities and other key industries being controlled by outside agencies.

4. It is possible that this may not be considered a sufficient assurance by the successful American businessman to whom you refer.<sup>3</sup> More I have no authority to say or give. Indeed I know that the whole trend of Indian opinion is opposed to any further guarantees. We realise that this may perhaps mean a somewhat reduced tempo of industrialisation, though we hope that even so we shall be able to keep up our rate of progress. But in any event we would rather have a slower tempo than lose control of our industry in any way.

5 You will realise that, in spite of our internal troubles, India is on the verge of big changes and we have vast plans of development. I have little doubt that India will develop very rapidly politically, industrially and economically. We have the resources to go ahead and we have the full intention of doing so. India is going to play a big part in the future. Because we think of India in this big way, we do not want to tie her down to special interests abroad whose policy might conflict with our own policy. We should like their cooperation and assure them of a sufficient reward for it. But this must be within the terms of our own policy and with full freedom for us to do what we consider proper. If American businessmen have fears about the future, Indians have their fears also and the dominant fear is any kind of economic subservience to outside authority.

6 What I have said above will, I hope, make you appreciate the way many of us are thinking. As I have said, no definite and clear cut policy has thus far been evolved by Government here. Whatever that might be, it will not be far removed from what I have indicated above.

7. I fear there is little chance of my going to the United States for many months. I should like to go there and I am sure I shall go there. But that will be some time later.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3 Curtis Calder—Chairman of Electric Bond and Share Company, a big public utility company, among whose subsidiaries was the American and Foreign Power Company with widespread and great foreign properties

## 5. To Asaf Ali<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
29th April 1947

My dear Asaf,

Some time ago I received a letter from Westmore Willcox. This was an extraordinary letter asking us to give all manner of guarantees to American businessmen I am sending you a copy of my reply to him.<sup>2</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 J N Collection

2 See the preceding item

## 6. To Govind Ballabh Pant<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
18 May 1947

My dear Pantji,

I have already sent you a copy of Albert Mayer's letter to me I have recently heard from Pitambar Pant from America He met Mayer and he says that Mayer has a feeling of being left suspended in vacua, baffled completely as to how his proposals<sup>2</sup> were received, "absolutely dead pan, little reaction, practically no question This is bad and it takes all your guts and tenacity not to let it affect your work and energy" These are Mayer's own words in the course of a letter

I am sorry he is feeling that way and yet I can understand this feeling as I have it myself about so many things in India. I think that it would be a pity to lose Mayer not only because he seems to me eminently suited for expert work in India but also because of the experience he has gained. We should not waste all this. Whatever the future may hold,

1 J N Collection

2 In December 1946, Albert Mayer prepared a "Preliminary Outline for Village Planning and Reconstruction," proposing a basic rural pilot project particularly suitable for Indian conditions The project sought to involve the villagers in the work of rural development

we shall have to work hard to rebuild and reconstruct everything and I have no doubt that Mayer would be of great assistance. As a matter of fact we can easily employ him on behalf of the Government of India. I do not wish to raise this question just now here because of changing political conditions. Personally I would rather he concentrate his energies on the U P.<sup>3</sup> Later when he comes we could use him for other purposes also if necessary and if he has the time to spare from the U.P. In any event I hope you will come to an early decision and inform him so that he can fix his programme accordingly. On the whole I think that in order to utilise him to the full, he should be given some latitude to bring expert associates

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3 The pilot development project, worked out with the assistance of Albert Mayer, was started in the Etawah district of Uttar Pradesh in October 1948

## 7. To D. Garnet Davey<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
23 May 1947

Dear Dr. Davey,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your letter of May 15th

I agree with you that there is a tendency in India to rush in and try to do many things at the same time.<sup>3</sup> Inevitably there is a danger of wastage of effort in this. India today, in spite of our troubles, is a dynamic country. It has some of the exuberance of youth and youth will go awry occasionally. We shall try our best to concentrate on the essential things first. But I am convinced that various aspects of national life and economy are so inter-related that it is difficult to ignore any. By concentrating too much on some things and ignoring others we may have to face bottlenecks

1 J N Papers, N M M L

2 David Garnet Davey (b 1912); British biologist, lecturer, University College, Cardiff, 1939-40, Ministry of Supply (Radar), 1941; joined the parasitology division at Imperial Chemical Industries, 1942, Biological Research Manager, Pharmaceuticals Division, 1957-69, President, European Society for Study of Drug Toxicity, 1964-69. In May 1947 he called on Nehru in Delhi

3 Davey thought that there was a tendency in India "to want to rush in to do all things that the rest of the world is doing and consequently there is a danger that the purely Indian problems will suffer"

I agree with you also about the necessity for symbiosis in human relationships.<sup>4</sup> I have no doubt that some time or other this will develop. But the human factor is more incalculable than any, especially when one has to deal with large numbers of people. We have a difficult past which to some extent conditions our minds and feelings on every side. We should try to get over it and build anew. If we succeed, it will certainly be an achievement of great value not only to us but to the world.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

4 Davey wrote, "At present, the nearest thing to a symbiotic relationship amongst peoples is the Commonwealth but all its members, so far, really come from British stock. There is now a chance of showing that people of different races can enter into the same relationship." He added that much material benefit could also come from an essentially spiritual association.

14

SCIENCE

**1. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
3rd February 1947

Dear Lord Wavell,

You were good enough to give me a copy of a communique<sup>2</sup> which was issued by the Travancore Government regarding the exploitation of thorium nitrate and other minerals. As you know this is a subject of great importance both from the point of view of Government and of scientists. The Science Congress passed a special resolution on the subject<sup>3</sup> and reference was made to it also at the recent Mineral Policy Conference held in Delhi under the auspices of the Works, Mines and Power Department.<sup>4</sup>

I should be grateful if I could be informed what further progress has been made in this matter. I would suggest that a full statement be made to the public so that no charge might be made of secret arrangements being arrived at without due notice and criticism.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 J N. Collection

- 2 In January 1947 the Government of Travancore announced that in collaboration with a British firm—which would supply the technical knowledge—they were setting up a factory for the production of thorium from the State's deposits of monazite sand. The arrangement involved "the export to the United Kingdom for a limited period of a limited quantity of surplus monazite and of the factory's output of thorium nitrate, save for what may be required in India"
- 3 The general committee of the Indian Science Congress, presided over by Nehru, passed a resolution on 6 January 1947 which strongly recommended state ownership of the mineral resources of India, including the States, and demanded immediate action to conserve these resources, particularly uranium and thorium bearing minerals, in the interests of India
- 4 The Mineral Policy Conference was summoned to evolve a national policy concerning the country's mineral wealth

**2. The Need for a Scientific Manpower Committee<sup>1</sup>**

- 1 In a recent note on the post-war defence forces of India I stated

1 Note, 11 February 1947 Cabinet Secretariat Papers

that a Scientific Manpower Committee should be appointed.<sup>2</sup> This matter seems to me of considerable importance and urgency not merely from the defence point of view but also for many other reasons. Indeed all our projects and plans for development, in whatever sphere they might lie, are likely to be affected by the number and quality of scientists available. This is a basic matter and the earlier it is tackled the better.

2. Even the U.K., where scientific training is much more developed and organised, felt the need of such a committee and a Scicntific Man-power Committee was appointed in December 1945 under the chairmanship of Sir Alan Barlow. This Committee reported in May 1946. The terms of this committee were "to consider the policies which should govern the use and development of our scientific manpower and resources during the next ten years and to submit a report on very broad lines at an early date so as to facilitate forward planning in those fields which are dependent upon the use of scientific manpower."

3. In India today there is a demand for development all along the line and a large number of projects have been prepared or are under preparation. There are schemes for scientific research institutes, technical institutes and a host of other institutions. Yet all these as well as the future of industry and defence depend upon the proper and most effective organisation and utilisation of the scientific manpower and resources available in India. There can be no doubt whatever that there is a great deal of potential scientific talent in India. Whenever a chance is given it is taken advantage of. We have some first-rate scientists. It is true, however, that their number is limited considering the size and the demands of the country. There is not only a lack of opportunity for training but also "wastage" and "leakage." Many young men who show great scientific talent in the universities drift to the civil or other services where this talent and experience are not employed.

4. It is roughly estimated that about 1% or less of our scientific manpower is being utilised at present, though even that is not properly organised. If we can raise it to 5%, we would have as large and as fine a body of scientists in India as there exists in the U.K. at present. In the U.K. it is said that 50% of the available scientific talent is being used. This figure is sought to be increased.

5. Unless this problem of the expansion and organisation of scientific manpower is tackled immediately, we shall have bottle-necks in all our

2. See *ante*, section 9, item 1.

plans for development as well as defence. It should be remembered that there is close relationship between pure science and various branches of engineering and technology. Defence depends on the growth of technology and the expansion of scientific research. We shall require in the future not only trained scientists but also technical assistants. A balanced scheme of scientific and technical education requires expansion not only in the number of students but an even larger proportionate expansion in the number of teachers and also an expansion in research schools.

6. At present we are thinking in terms of starting several technical institutes on a big scale. This is of course desirable but it is not enough. These institutes cannot stand by themselves. They can only function properly with the growth of scientific education all over the country.

7. A large number of Indian students have been sent abroad in recent years chiefly for technical training. There have been many criticisms of the way this has been done and a reconsideration of the whole scheme is called for. It is obvious that it is desirable for every person who can be trained in India to receive his training here. Only a limited number of specially qualified persons should be sent abroad for specialized training, usually for particular kinds of work to be undertaken. It is easier, cheaper and far better from the national point of view to increase rapidly opportunities for training students here, than to send any of them abroad for more or less elementary training.

8. As a matter of fact the opportunities of training abroad are very limited today. The universities in the U.K. and the U.S.A. as well as probably in other countries abroad are overfull and find it difficult to accept foreign students. In a British report it is stated that "in present circumstances every student enrolled from overseas excludes a student from the U.K." In the U.S.A. many of our students have been compelled, after periods of waiting, to join second-rate universities or institutes which are not much better than some Indian universities.

9. We must, therefore, think in terms of a rapid expansion of teaching and training facilities in India, remembering always that quality must not be sacrificed for quantity.

10. It is clear that we must rely principally on existing universities for the training of scientists. Technical institutes will not take the place of universities; they will supplement them. Therefore we have to look at the science departments of existing universities and try to improve and expand them. These science departments are often good and some of

the professors in India are very capable men. But the science faculties are poorly manned, laboratory equipment is very limited and the professor, who ought to be doing research work for a great part of his time, is busy with teaching or administrative duties. Hardly anywhere in India is there a real nucleus of first-rate scientists working together for a specialised purpose, and this is the only way to have continuity of first-class research work. We have good men spread out doing overlapping work and when such a man leaves the university, that work ends.

11. Most of our universities are connected with provincial governments. The only three universities dealing directly with the Central Government are Delhi, Benares and Aligarh. All universities at present suffer from lack of funds and equipment. Large numbers of students wishing to take up scientific courses can find no admittance, and if they were admitted the staff is not sufficient to teach them. Some of them, who go through their course and do well in it, cannot be fitted into any useful work and drift to other activities, thus wasting their scientific training and experience.

12. For all these reasons and many others which might be mentioned, it has become urgently necessary to plan the training of scientists and the utilization of scientific talents. This indeed is a first priority in all our schemes of development. It is also a first priority from the point of view of defence. The British Scientific Manpower Committee assessed priorities so as to make the best use of the limited supply of scientists as follows:

First—Teaching and fundamental research.

Second—Civil science, both Governmental and industrial.

Third—Defence science

Some such system will have to be followed by us also. But as a matter of fact we should try to increase the supply of scientists so as to cover all these fields

13. I suggest, therefore, that a Scientific Manpower Committee be appointed to survey this problem and to recommend policies which should govern the use and development of our scientific manpower and resources during the next five years. This is a matter which might perhaps lie within the purview of the Education Department. But it is so important that it is desirable for the Cabinet to consider it as a whole and to give it the weight of its authority. If the principle is accepted, the personnel will have to be named. There should be no difficulty about this as there are a number of very eminent and qualified scientists in India. Apart from the scientists I would suggest the inclusion of some

eminent educationist, other than a scientist, also. It can be asked to report within a stated period which should not exceed six months at the most.

14. I suggest that this note may be put up at an early date before the Cabinet for their consideration.

### **3. Scientific Research and Defence Plans<sup>1</sup>**

The Hon'ble Member for External Affairs said that though it was not strictly necessary for the present purpose, he would in fact like it to be recorded that industrial development and scientific research were of vital importance to the country's future and that due attention should be paid to them in making our defence plans. He added further that he had drafted a separate note on the subject of Scientific Manpower Committee<sup>2</sup> which was a problem of first-rate importance and he was anxious that it should be considered early by the Cabinet

1 Remarks at a Cabinet meeting, 12 February 1947 Cabinet Secretariat Papers

2 See the preceding item

### **4. To Abul Kalam Azad<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
14 February 1947

My dear Maulana,

A few days ago I mentioned at our informal meeting that I had prepared a note on a Scientific Manpower Committee and sent it to the Cabinet Secretariat. I had thought that this would be circulated soon to Members of the Government and so I did not send it to you. But there has been some delay in this and now it will only come to you probably with the agenda for the next Cabinet meeting.

2. This note concerns your Department more than any other and secondly the Industries Department. The kind of committee I have suggested will partly cover the question of Indian students being sent abroad for technical training. It strikes me, therefore, that perhaps it might not be worthwhile to have two committees. Probably one committee can deal with both the subjects. But this is for you to consider.
3. My note is rather a general one and does not put forward any specific proposal with terms of reference etc. If the general line of approach in my note is approved by the Cabinet, I would suggest that the Education and Industries Departments might together draw up the terms of reference and nominate the personnel. This personnel will consist chiefly of eminent scientists. There should also be a person with administrative experience, also an educationist. It seems to me essential that the committee should have a really good full-time paid secretary who presumably will be an official.

4. I enclose a copy of my note.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 5. To Laurence Dudley Stamp<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
15 February 1947

My dear Professor Stamp,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your letter of the 6th February.<sup>3</sup> I was happy to meet you here during the sessions of the Science Congress I quite agree with you that we are on the verge of rapid progress in many directions and that proper land utilization and land planning are most important for national development. We are trying to think in terms of organising our

1. J.N Collection

2 (1898-1966); President, Indian Science Congress (Geology section), 1927; Professor of Geography in the University of London, 1945-48; Professor of Social Geography at the London School of Economics, 1948-58; author of several books on India

3 Stamp had said that there was a growing realization on the part of Indian geographers of the importance of detailed scientific surveys and thorough field investigations

scientific ability and capacity and increasing it so that we can tackle our many problems more effectively.

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 6. To Rajendra Prasad<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
17 February 1947

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have your letter of the 17th enclosing a copy of a letter from Mr. B. N. Sharma.<sup>2</sup> I quite agree with you that there should be some kind of an employment exchange for scientists and technicians and the like.<sup>3</sup> Or at any rate a proper register of them which can be referred to In America or rather in the U.S.A. this kind of thing is done in a very efficient way. I shall give you an instance. Somewhere in Washington a register is kept of all such technically trained men. I think it consists of about 600,000 names. General Eisenhower, when he was in Africa, sent a demand for every agricultural expert in the U.S.A. who knew Spanish and who had some knowledge of North Africa. He wanted these persons immediately. Within six hours of the receipt of the telegram these persons were traced from the register. There were about 30 of them. Within two days all the 30 were flying across to North Africa. Much of this is done by means of special machines.

There is no doubt that we are wasting our scientific and technical talent and yet at the same time we are shouting for more trained persons and opportunities for training. You must have received with the papers for the next Cabinet meeting my note on a Scientific Manpower Committee. I think it should be the job of this committee to consider this problem and tell us how we should proceed about it. I do not think our Development Board will be able to do much. It requires a great deal of development itself before it can tackle such problems.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection

2. Chief Medical and Public Health Officer, Mewar State.

3. Rajendra Prasad had thought that the highly skilled manpower available in the country was not being utilized adequately and suggested that the Development Board should be asked to take up this question.

## 7. Retrenchment in Ordnance Factories<sup>1</sup>

The Hon'ble Member for External Affairs said that he did not wish to add anything to his note which had already been circulated. The importance of the subject was obvious and he suggested that his proposal in paragraph 13 of his note, namely, that a Scientific Manpower Committee should be appointed to survey these problems and to recommend policies which should govern the use and development of our scientific manpower and resources during the next five years should be accepted. It would presumably be for the Education and I. & S. Departments to work out further details.

The Hon'ble Member for External Affairs referred in this connection to a matter which he said was connected with this problem though was not strictly relevant to it. He had been informed that owing to a falling off of Government orders, ordnance factories had discharged or were discharging large numbers of skilled men. It seemed to him tragic that men who had been trained over a period of years should thus be allowed to be dispersed and 'wasted' at a time when it ought not to be difficult for the ordnance factories to work to full capacity by meeting private industry's demands. He hoped that this matter would be taken up energetically by the Department concerned.<sup>2</sup>

1. Remarks at a Cabinet meeting, 19 February 1947. Cabinet Secretariat Papers
- 2 The proposal to appoint a Scientific Manpower Committee was approved

## 8. State Control of Monazite and Thorium Nitrate<sup>1</sup>

I am deeply interested in this matter not only on behalf of E.A.D., but also as President of the Indian Science Congress. Indeed, during the session of this Congress last January in Delhi, there were rumours to the effect that the Travancore Durbar had entered into an agreement for the disposal of monazite and thorium nitrate. This produced some consternation among many of the Indian scientists present and a special resolution was passed, as far as I remember, that the State should own

1 Note, 27 February 1947. File No 17(4)47-PMS

and control all these minerals and specially any foreign exploitation of them should be prohibited. This resolution referred to all minerals and more especially and specifically to those minerals which are necessary for the production of atomic energy.

Dr. Homi Bhabha, the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Committee, also spoke to me about this matter and said that it was exceedingly important that our mineral resources for atomic energy be preserved. If they are to be disposed of this should be done only on behalf of the Government of India and after full consideration of all connected issues. This is not merely a financial matter. It has international implications. One important aspect of it is that if we agreed to give any of these very valuable minerals to any foreign country we should get in exchange a measure of cooperation from them in the production of atomic energy. We have in India some very distinguished scientists working on atomic energy and cosmic rays. They lack facilities. If they work in cooperation with their opposite numbers in the U.K., U.S.A or France (the chief countries carrying on this research, apart from the U.S.S.R.), India and the world would both profit by their work.

It is not quite clear, even now, what the exact terms of the agreement between the Travancore Durbar and the British Government are.<sup>2</sup> The Travancore Durbar's communique does not give the text of this agreement. It would appear that after the communique was issued some new agreement was arrived at in regard to monazite and thorium. Some reference to this is made in Mr Trevelyan's note of the 24 February, wherein it is said that Mr. Griffin<sup>3</sup> gave some account of the agreement. I would have thought that the exact terms of the agreement should have been communicated to us formally and placed on the file.

The Atomic Energy Commission of the United Nations has already, as pointed out by Mr. Trevelyan, recommended that there should be effective control of the production and use of uranium, thorium and their fissionable derivatives. This report will be considered by the Security Council next autumn. Meanwhile, I think we should proceed on the basis of this report.

I agree with Dr Bhatnagar's<sup>4</sup> suggestion that the Central Government should not allow surplus monazite or thorium nitrate to be ex-

<sup>2</sup> See *ante*, item 1, fn 2

<sup>3</sup> L C L Griffin (1900-1964), entered Indian Civil Service 1923, Secretary to the Crown Representative Department, 1944-47.

<sup>4</sup> Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (1895-1955), FRS, Professor of Chemistry, University of Punjab, Lahore, 1924-40, Director of Scientific and Industrial Research, Government of India, 1940-51, Secretary to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Scientific Research, 1951-55

ported from Travancore except through the Government of India, who should purchase the whole of the produce. If the United Kingdom want any of this surplus they should deal with the Government of India. It is desirable, therefore, that an enquiry be made, as suggested by Dr. Bhatnagar, in regard to the quantities of monazite sands involved in the transaction between Travancore State and the British Government or firm and the amount of money involved in the purchase of the whole produce of monazite and thorium nitrate from Travancore State.

How we should proceed about this matter is for Commerce and other Departments to consider, but meanwhile the suggested enquiry would be useful.

The market value of thorium nitrate, though an important factor, is not the deciding factor. Apparently the amount of money involved in the purchase of the whole production of monazite and thorium nitrate in Travancore is round about Rs 20 lakhs. The important consideration is first how much of it we must keep for India's requirements and, secondly, on what terms we should give it to any other country, the terms including cooperation in atomic research. Again, if we are to give it to any other country, we should have direct transactions with it. This means that we should not give it to any country for it to pass it on to a third country. In direct dealings we can gain direct advantages.

There need be no question of the Government of India storing up vast quantities of these precious articles. What we may consider necessary for our use now and later must anyhow be protected and stored, whatever the cost. What is not necessary will be disposed of to our best advantage.

Similar considerations apply to beryl.

In regard to the questions put by the Works, Mines and Power Department, I would suggest the following answers:

- (i) It is desirable for the Government of India to prohibit the export of monazite and thorium nitrate from India. What is the best method of doing this is for the Departments concerned to consider. This would mean that any export would be in accordance with the explicit permission of the Government of India and subject to the conditions laid down;
- (ii) This rule should apply to beryl also;
- (iii) I am unable to say what is the best method of prohibiting or controlling exports of these essential minerals;
- (iv) I think the Government of India should agree to purchase all quantities of such minerals which may be offered for sale. The question of financing should not offer any difficulty, because of the very great value of these minerals. Primarily they should be

- employed in research work or industrial purposes in India. Secondly, they may be exported in the manner indicated above;
- (v) The export of these minerals would necessarily be limited to particular countries. On no account can this matter be left to the discretion of exporters;
- (vi) As I have mentioned above, Dr. Bhatnagar's suggestions should be accepted. They appear to be supported by Mr. Wadia,<sup>5</sup> the Mineral Adviser.

On the whole, my views coincide largely with the decisions of the Inter-Departmental Committee, except that I think the Government of India should be prepared to purchase all quantities of these materials and other enquiries should be proceeded with to give effect to this recommendation.

In considering this matter expert scientific advice is obvious indeed. Fortunately, we have got Dr. Bhatnagar and Mr. Wadia to advise us. I would suggest, however, that Dr. Homi Bhabha, the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Committee, might also be consulted as probably he knows more about the value and use of monazite, thorium nitrate and beryl in connection with the production of atomic energy than other people in India.

5. D.N. Wadia.

**GENERAL****I. The Congress Organisation**

**1. To the President, Ambala District Congress Committee<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
17 February 1947

Dear Friend,

I have received a telegram in connection with the Sikh election in Ambala District for the seat vacated by Sardar Baldev Singh<sup>2</sup>. I do not wholly understand this telegram, but I want to make it clear what our position is. In view of the fact that we are cooperating in the Interim Government with Sardar Baldev Singh, and our policy generally is of cooperation with Akali representatives, we have decided not to oppose each other in elections for the present. Where there is a vacancy it should be filled by a candidate of the party which held that seat previously. Therefore in the vacancy caused by Sardar Baldev Singh resigning from the Ambala seat, no Congress candidate should stand, and the representative of Sardar Baldev Singh's party should be allowed to stand and be elected without opposition on the part of the Congress. Please see that these directions are carried out. The Punjab Provincial Congress Committee has already been informed of this.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 J.N Collection

2 Baldev Singh was elected to the Punjab assembly in February 1946 from the Ambala north constituency. He vacated the seat to assume charge of the defence portfolio in the Interim Government on 19 September 1946.

**2. To T. Prakasam<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
20 February 1947

My dear Prakasam,

I have received the copy of the letter you sent to Sardar Patel<sup>2</sup>. I do

1 *Sardar Patel's Correspondence 1945-50*, Vol. 5, pp 201-202

2 In his letter of 17 February to Patel, Prakasam had argued for delay in convening a meeting of the Madras Legislature Congress Party to discuss the no-confidence motion against him as Chief Minister

not know what you propose to do in the matter and I have no particular desire to interfere. It is for the Working Committee or the Congress President to do so if they think it desirable. But obviously I am anxious that the Congress prestige and our work should not suffer; and conditions in Madras are distressing. I am not in a position to judge or to cast blame on anyone, but when such a state of affairs exists in any province it brings discredit to all concerned.

2 Of one thing I am quite sure There can be no proper or effective government in a province from the democratic point of view or any other unless there is mutual understanding and cooperation between the Ministry and the majority party which supports it. There must, therefore, be constant consultation between the two If there is any suspicion that a ministry is holding on without the sanction of the party, the government will gradually come to a standstill and the ministry will be discredited.

3. I am personally acquainted chiefly with the working of the Central Assembly Congress Party here and the U.P. Assembly Congress Party. Both meet frequently, sometimes from day to day, to consider important matters with the Ministers There is often some conflict between them, but an attempt is continuously made to resolve this conflict by full discussion. The moment that attempt fails, the Ministry will go regardless of the fact as to whether it is in the right or wrong.

4. I do not know how frequently you have been having meetings of your Assembly Congress Party or any consultations with them. In any event it is highly necessary that a very early meeting of the party should be held and a full discussion should take place The final arbiter must be the party. There is no other way It also seems to me dangerous to delay having a meeting of the party. When a challenge is made that has to be accepted immediately without a day's delay. Delay makes-matters worse. I hope, therefore, that you will hold a very early meeting of your party, tell them what you have in mind and hear what they say. The matter is so important that no sudden decision should be taken and full time should be given for consideration.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 3. Official Repression in 1942<sup>1</sup>

The Working Committee have considered the representation of the Executive Committee of the Congress Party in the U.P. Legislature in regard to the demand for an enquiry into "the conduct of those Government officers who committed barbarities during 1942 movement and to take suitable action against those who are found guilty."

The Committee are of opinion that any Government officer, who has been guilty of barbarous and inhuman conduct, should be proceeded against, if there is *prima facie* sufficient proof to support the charge. They understand that the U.P. Government made it clear some time ago that they would take such action if any particular case was brought to their notice. Apparently no case, supported by adequate proof, has been brought to their notice yet. It is not possible for them to take any steps unless those who make the charge produce sufficient proof in support of specific charges.

The Committee are definitely opposed to roving inquiries which are not based on specific charges with proof. This will entangle Government in legal or other actions which are likely to fail and bring discredit on the Government. There is always a danger of a roving commission of inquiry assuming the character of an inquisition. Owing to the lapse of time since the events referred to, the appointment of a roving inquiry is still less desirable.

The proposers of the resolution should, however, be invited to bring specific charges against particular individuals and adduce proof in support of these charges. These should be enquired into by Government.

The Committee advise accordingly.

<sup>1</sup> This resolution, drafted by Nehru on 7 March, was passed by the Congress Working Committee at its meeting held on 7-8 March 1947 AICC File No 71/1946-47, pp 79-80, N M M L

4. To Vallabhbhai Patel<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
13 April 1947

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have your letter of 11 April enclosing a copy of a letter from Mavalankar.<sup>2</sup> I appreciate what Mavalankar<sup>3</sup> has written. But I entirely agree with you that this is not the time for any individual decisions which are likely to create difficulty and embarrassment to some of our colleagues I feel, however, that the matter will have to be taken up some time or other, as soon as the immediate difficulties are resolved.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal

1 *Sardar Patel's Correspondence 1945-50*, Vol 4, p 441

2 In his letter of 9 April 1947, G V Mavalankar wrote to Patel that he desired that the President's salary should be reduced to about Rs 2,000 or Rs 2,500 a month A salary of Rs 4,000 and a palatial accommodation for the President of the Assembly did not fit in with the ideology of the Congress

3 G.V Mavalankar (1888-1956); Congressman of Ahmedabad; Speaker, Bombay Legislative Assembly, 1937-46; President, Central Assembly, 1946-47, Speaker, Indian Legislative Assembly, 1947-52, and Lok Sabha, 1952 till his death

5. To J.B. Kripalani<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
2 May 1947

My dear Jiwat,

I have noticed in this evening's papers fairly full accounts of what was said at the Working Committee meetings It is obvious that someone, who was present at the meetings, has given this information to the press We have often complained about this in the past with little result. Now the situation is even more delicate and some of us will be

1 Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.

put in an extraordinarily embarrassing position by these disclosures to the press. Indeed if there is no surety about secrecy, it will become impossible for us to say anything at the meetings of the Working Committee.

2. There are many matters which some of us have been discussing among ourselves for days past. There was no reference in the press to them because we could keep our secrets. Now the moment anything mentioned in the Working Committee, it is broadcast by the press. One might almost imagine that pressmen attend our Committee meetings.
3. What should be done about it I do not know. That is for you to consider. But it is obvious that I shall have to take extreme care in the future as to what I say in the Committee. If there is anything that I do not want to be published, I shall have to say it to some individuals separately and not to the Committee as a whole. I hope you agree with me. I can see no other course open to me. May I suggest that at least you might write to all the members of the Committee or at any rate to all those present at the meetings here and inform them of the grave impropriety of disclosures to the press? I must confess that I am greatly put out by this kind of thing. I know for a fact that our reputation suffers greatly when this happens.

Yours affectionately  
Jawaharlal

## 6. To T. Prakasam<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
31st May 1947

Dear Prakasam,

I have today received your letters of May 19th and May 23rd. I do not remember seeing previously your letter of the 2nd May, a copy of which you have sent.

<sup>1</sup> File No 7(1)/47-PMS

I hope you realise that we are passing through very critical times and are kept fully occupied with various responsible duties. The enquiries you have made should properly be addressed to the Congress office and the Congress President and not to individual members of the Working Committee<sup>2</sup>

I have not got the resolution of the Working Committee to which you refer, nor have I a clear recollection of it.

You will remember that when you came to Delhi you had a talk with me about Madras affairs and I gave you my views on the subject. It was not necessary to hold an enquiry to find out that a large number of Congress members of the Assembly had given notice of some kind of a vote of no-confidence in you<sup>3</sup>. I suggested to you then that this matter should be considered at an early stage by the Congress Party in the Assembly and some decision be made this way or that way. It was unbecoming for any such move to be suppressed. I am glad that ultimately you took this course.

Yours sincerely,  
J. Nehru

- 2 Prakasam had enquired whether Nehru was a party to a resolution which he was told had been passed by the Working Committee on 6 March 1947 condemning his leadership
- 3 A majority of Congress legislators passed a vote of no-confidence in T Prakasam on 28 February 1947. He resigned on 23 March when the Madras Legislature Congress Party, under the presidentship of J.B. Kripalani, elected O.P. Ramaswamy Reddiar as its new leader.

## GENERAL

## II. Miscellaneous

## 1. Doctors and Public Service<sup>1</sup>

The medical profession is very important from the point of view of looking after the health of the community and from the point of view of making the community think in terms of the scientific method of approach to life's problems.

The work that engages you in this conference is of the most vital character. The organization of the health of the country in a sense precedes almost everything except food, which presumably is the basis of health. Subject to that first priority, health and sanitation come highest in the list.

In India we have a medical profession organized more or less on what may be called modern scientific lines. We also have indigenous and ancient systems of medicine which are still used in large parts of the country. Sometimes there is argument as to what should be done about all this apparent overlapping. Speaking for myself and not on behalf of the Government, I should like to put before you my own views. I have no doubt at all that medical science in India has greatly advanced. In fact, it may be said that India once led the world in the field of medical research. Afterwards the Arabs became leaders in that science, and from them medical knowledge spread to other parts of the world.

Even now if one were to study what was done in India and by the Arabs one would be able to learn a great deal. Unfortunately, it is true that all these ancient systems of medicine, excellent though they were, later became static and unscientific. They satisfied themselves with following precedents and failed to improve the science by experimentation and investigation. The indigenous systems may have excellent remedies for certain ailments, but they lack scientific basis.

People talk of allopathy, homoeopathy and various other pathies and methods. But what is important is —are you going to follow a scientific method or not? Those trained in medical colleges adopt scientific methods of treatment, whereas, comparatively speaking, *vaidas* and *hakims* do not. But I am not prepared to say that even the trained people are very scientific. In fact my own experience is that, while in a narrow field they may show some element of scientific approach, their approach to

<sup>1</sup> Inaugural speech at the annual conference of the Association of Physicians of India, New Delhi, 14 February 1947 From *The Hindustan Times*, 15 February 1947.

larger problems of life is unscientific. Scientific method, in my opinion, is an approach to life and all life's problems

Any group of human beings in a trade are liable to create certain vested interests which they always seek to protect. This interferes with the growth of the community. Charges of this kind have been made against the medical profession too. One of the most eminent men, Bernard Shaw, has made these charges on many occasions and there is no doubt that there is a great deal of truth in what he has said.

In olden times there was a feeling that a physician was a public servant functioning for the good of the community. In theory the State is still supposed to look after the health of the people. The question has, however, arisen as to how far the State should intervene and control the practice of medicine. It is a very important question and in almost all progressive countries there is a great deal of debate about it. There is a general tendency for greater intervention and State supervision, so that everyone may have the benefit of full medical advice. India will have to consider this question as soon as she is free. Meanwhile, doctors should try to maintain certain standards and infuse scientific methods not only in their profession but outside. They should organize themselves for public service.

Surgeons, physicians and specialists are not only a very important element in the community but a very dangerous element also. In one of the books I have read, the author visualized a time when the medical profession organized as a trade union might gain control over the State by threatening to poison the whole people.

There is no doubt that scientists and experts can hope to wield such power at a future date. It is already exemplified in the atom bomb. Though atom bombs have not been used by scientists so far, there is a distinct danger of their resorting to such an instrument to gain their ends.

## 2. To Mahatma Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
28.2.1947

Dear Bapu,

The Working Committee is meeting here soon and all of us were anxious to have you here on this occasion. We considered the question of sending you a joint telegram appealing to you to come. But we decided

1. Pyarelal Papers

ultimately not to send it. We felt sure that you would not come at this stage and our telegram would only be an embarrassment.

But though we are not sending the telegram we feel very strongly that your advice during the coming critical weeks is most necessary. It is possible of course for one or two of us to visit you but that is not a satisfactory way of doing things. It is a full discussion among all of us that we would have liked to have. At present it is exceedingly difficult for any of us to leave Delhi even for two or three days. For several to go together would upset work completely. There is the budget in the Assembly, the Committees of the Constituent Assembly, the negotiations with the Princes, the change in Viceroys and so many other things that demand constant attention. So we cannot go away and if you will not come here, how are we to meet?

You have written to me in the letter Sudhir brought about sharing the same bed with Manu.<sup>2</sup> No one who knows you or has any sense of proportion would normally attach any importance to this. I do not know much about this matter and I would hesitate to say anything outside my own province. Sardar has spoken to me briefly about it and so have some others. I confess I have been greatly troubled not at the propriety of any action that you may think fit for you are the best judge, but rather at the whole set-up. I dislike intensely people talking about these matters. It is impossible for the average person to understand it all and there are plenty of persons who take delight in distorting and misrepresenting anything that you may do. Even our friends are greatly disturbed. Foreign correspondents whisper about it. Obviously all this injures the cause which you have at heart. I do not understand why it should be considered necessary to raise such issues which can do no good and may do much harm.

Apart from this I feel that what may be natural and unexceptionable in you will not be so in others. What you do becomes an example to others and your warnings to them will go unheeded.

I would not have written to you about this matter, if you had not yourself mentioned it in your letter and some of your speeches I feel a little out of my depth and I hate discussing personal and private matters. You will I hope forgive me.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

<sup>2</sup> Manu Gandhi (1928-1969) was a granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi and his companion in his last years.

### 3. Service to the Community<sup>1</sup>

I am sorry I am unable to be present at the Doon School for its annual convocation. I should have liked to go there and to meet the boys and the teachers India is changing rapidly today and very soon she will be a fully independent country A nation, however, is not made by the laws that the legislature might pass, but by the men and women who live in and work for it. The burden and privilege of serving our country will fall on those who are in schools and colleges today. I am interested, therefore, in meeting them and finding out what they are and what promise they hold, how they are being trained for this purpose and what are the ideals and objectives they aim at. If India is going to be a great and progressive nation, then we cannot rely on a mere handful of specially trained men and women, but must take education to the masses I am sure there is a great deal of talent all over the country which at present finds no scope for lack of opportunity. We have to give this opportunity to every boy and girl in India

Meanwhile we have to give some specialised training to even a limited number, so that they may fit themselves for special service The Doon School is a special kind of school in India. There is a danger of such a school giving a training which rather isolates the boys from their general environment. Nevertheless, I think it is doing good and useful work and I wish it success in its endeavour to train up good citizens of India.

To the boys I would say that because they are having greater opportunities in their education and training than the average boy in India, they will be expected to justify this by providing better service. Otherwise, their special training is a wasted effort Service does not mean aiming at high salaries and official positions All of us have to make some kind of a living and it is wrong for any to depend upon others. But if the motive is just to make money or to have authority over others, then the education they have received is wasted.

In India in the past, the possession of money was seldom honoured. The ideal was learning and service to the community. Today, unfortunately, the men of money or those who occupy some office imagine that they are more important or better than others, even though they might lack real education and culture and be completely devoid of any

<sup>1</sup> New Delhi, 1 March 1947. Message sent to the Doon High School on its Founder's Day, 9 March 1947 *The Hindu*, 11 March 1947.

idealism. If a school gives proper training, it should prepare boys for the life they are going to lead afterwards. That life should mean a full participation in civic affairs. India has many cities and towns, but it is essentially a country of villages. Those who wish to serve India, therefore, cannot confine themselves to the cities. It is the village that calls for service.

A school should teach the art of cooperative living and cooperative work. This is even more important in India today than elsewhere, because so many people have gone astray and raise barriers between one group and another. There is room for all in India provided they cooperate with and respect each other. We may belong to this religion or that; but the first thing we have to learn is that we are human beings and Indians and that each one of us has the honour of India in his keeping. India had been famous in the past for its tolerance when people in other countries were quarrelling with each other over trivial matters. Today there are many foolish people in India who have forgotten this old tradition of tolerance. It is for our schools to train our youth in the practice of tolerance and cooperation.

I am glad that the Doon School encourages this. I am glad also that the Doon School teaches the value and dignity of physical labour. It is an amazing thing that any person should consider physical labour as a lowly form of activity. It is labour alone that ultimately gives dignity to man. Those who do not labour, physically or mentally, live on the labour of others and that can be good for no one. We have got a false sense of values in India and elsewhere today, which places the worker low down in the scale of society, and a person, who does not do any real work and is thus dependent on others' work, high up in the scale. We have to change this.

Our work all over India will necessarily be carried on more and more in the language of the country. In our schools especially, Hindustani will become the dominant language, whether this is in the Urdu or Hindi form. Nevertheless English is bound to remain the next most important language for us, not only because of our long contacts with it, but also because it is at present the most widespread language in the world. It will not be possible for English to be taught in the same way as Hindustani in our schools generally. But it is desirable that at a place like the Doon School, where special facilities are available, English should be learnt well. It is an advantage to be bilingual, provided we know both the languages well.

We are living in exciting times, full of trouble and difficulty, but, at the same time, full of adventure. It should be a privilege for boys and girls, who are at school and college today, to prepare themselves

for this great adventure and be ready to face the troubles and difficulties that accompany all great undertakings with a clear mind and a stout heart. I hope the Doon School will send many such boys.

#### 4. To Harold Laski<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
10 March 1947

My dear Laski,

I have just received your letter of the 3rd March I am very sorry to learn that you will not be able to come to India this year. You say you cannot come in the late autumn. But I am not limiting you to any particular period You can come later in the year, in fact at any time between October and end of March You will be welcome even during the summer, but that is not a good time for the universities here and it is hot.

I would really like you to come and I do not want you to wait for a formal invitation. Whenever you think you can come here, please let me know. We are having a difficult time and we are likely to continue having it. It is no good waiting for normality, for I suppose that is beyond our reach for a long time all over the world When you come here, you may like some things and you will surely dislike many things That is bound to happen But I think it is good from every point of view, yours and ours, that you should come to India.

With all good wishes,

Ever yours,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J N Collection

#### 5. To Nilima Devi<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
12 March 1947

My dear Nilima,

Thank you for your letter of 10th March. I have received the bag of books you have sent.

1 J N. Papers, N M M L



WITH SULTAN SHAHRIR AT THE ASIAN RELATIONS CONFERENCE, NEW DELHI,  
APRIL 1947



WITH MAHATMA GANDHI DURING NATIONAL WEEK CELEBRATIONS 6 APRIL 1947

As regards requests for publishing extracts from my book, I leave the matter to you. You can charge any fee you think is suitable. There is no point in giving this free to publishers who want to profit by it. If it is done for some good cause, then you need not charge anything at all.

From what you tell me about the Indian Copyright Act,<sup>2</sup> some amendment appears to be desirable. But we are so full of other work that it is not possible for us to undertake this. If some private member undertakes it, we shall support him.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

<sup>2</sup> Nilima Devi pointed out that, according to the Indian Copyright Act, if no authorised translation of a book by an Indian author was published within 10 years of its first publication, anyone was free to translate and publish it in any language without reference to the author.

## 6. To B.G. Kher<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
29 March 1947

My dear Kher,

Some time during the last century the British Government took away some Buddha relics from Sanchi in Bhopal State and deposited them in the British Museum in London.<sup>2</sup> There has been considerable agitation for their return to India. This agitation succeeded and the relics were sent back. At the request of the Ceylon Government they were sent to Ceylon for a few weeks on their way to India. They are now in Ceylon.

2. I have been asked on behalf of the Mahabodhi Society as well as the Ceylon Ministers to receive these relics officially on behalf of the Government of India when they land on Indian soil. At first it was intended that they should land in Calcutta because the Mahabodhi Society has its headquarters there. But at my suggestion Bombay has been preferred. This is from every point of view more desirable and convenient.

<sup>1</sup> J N. Papers, N M M L

<sup>2</sup> In 1851

3. I have agreed to be present officially at the time of their arrival in Bombay. The day fixed for this is Monday, May 5th, which is the *Vaisakhi Purnima*, a day particularly auspicious among the Buddhists. I hope to reach Bombay the day before, on May 4th, by air and probably to return from Bombay on May 6th by air. The Constituent Assembly will be sitting then and I cannot afford to be away for a longer period.

4 The Bombay Government should, of course, help in every way and participate through you and perhaps the other Ministers at this function. Probably you will receive further information of it from the Mahabodhi Society and the Ceylon Ministers. This is just to send you first word of it.

5. I might add that the relics will go from Bombay to Sanchi in Bhopal State and will be received there officially by the Nawab of Bhopal

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

-  
**7. National Week 1947<sup>1</sup>**

For 26 years now we have celebrated the National Week from April 6th to April 13th. We have done so not in a spirit of keeping bitter memories alive but rather in a spirit of dedication to the cause of India's freedom.

This year we celebrate it in a new context when the independence of India at last seems to be assured to us. That independence can no longer be denied. But we realise fully that there are many hurdles still to be crossed. Every step towards freedom is resented and sometimes resisted by some people, even when freedom is achieved many difficulties will remain. It is in full consciousness of all these facts and in no light-hearted spirit that we approach the grave tasks before us.

<sup>1</sup> Message on the celebration of the National Week, New Delhi, 6 April 1947

It is fitting that we should celebrate this week which 27 years ago laid the foundations of the new phase of our national movement which during this period has seen so much suffering and achieved such substantial results. We cannot forget this past for we have been fashioned by it and have grown out of it. We shall celebrate it, therefore, in this new context today without bitterness and with a full determination not to weaken till our full task is achieved. And even then we shall have to be vigilant lest some inner weakness or outer danger imperil our freedom. We look at the world with friendship in our eyes and desire to cooperate with all nations. We hope that this final chapter of Indo-British history will be one of peaceful and cooperative transition which will lay the foundations of a new association based on freedom and mutual advantage. The bitterness of the past will fade away and only the sacrifices and inspiring features of that past will remain.

The recent Asian Conference held in New Delhi was a vision of things to come. India, on the eve of freedom, is already forging new links with her sister countries of Asia. The representatives of these countries came to her in search of some new union of hearts and minds and they found among themselves and among the representatives of India a warm response. We have made history during these last few days in New Delhi and Asia and the world will profit by this great step that has been taken.

I send greetings to the Indian League in London and to all our friends and comrades in Great Britain on the occasion of the celebration of this week and trust that it will be for them, as for us, a rededication to the cause of freedom everywhere.

## 8. To J.N.S. Bhardwaj<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
13 April 1947

Dear Mr. Bhardwaj,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your letter of the 4th April.<sup>3</sup> I am glad you approve of the proposal to have an Academy of Asian Culture in Delhi. This will

<sup>1</sup> J N Papers, N M M L

<sup>2</sup> A resident of Badli, Delhi

<sup>3</sup> JNS Bhardwaj's letter was in response to Nehru's appeal to the citizens of Delhi for contributions towards the establishment of an Asian University at Delhi. He offered rupees fifteen lakhs from a philanthropic trust but wanted to know the nature of the university, the expenditure involved and whether it would be possible to name the university after the philanthropist who created the trust.

be a kind of a university specializing in certain subjects, linguistic and cultural. I cannot give you any details because they have not been worked out yet. Vaguely we thought that we should collect Rs. 500,000/- for it. It may be possible, however, to start with a somewhat small sum. All this will have to be gone into later in some detail. I suppose the next step will be the formation of a provisional committee for the purpose.

I doubt if it will be advisable to name the university after a donor or philanthropist. It will be an Asian university and it should keep its wide character without any names attached to it. But it should be possible to name a special department or wing of the university after a donor.

I shall gladly meet you to discuss this matter. I am, however, quite full up for the rest of this month. Perhaps we can meet some time early in May.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 9. To Mrs. Edward Thompson<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
13 April 1947

Dear Mrs. Thompson,

Thank you for your letter which has just come. You know that I paid a brief visit to London early in December last.<sup>2</sup> I was hoping to meet you and Palmer there and I enquired about you; but you were in America.

I should imagine that it would be worthwhile publishing the final part of Edward's book on the Indian Princes.<sup>3</sup> I cannot say, of course, without knowing what it is. But anything that he wrote would be worth reading. It is true that events are moving fast and yet not so fast as one would like them to move, more specially in regard to the Princes. They still live in another world oblivious of much that is happening. Even an academic account dealing with paramountcy would be useful and worthwhile.

I am so glad that Palmer got a first in the History Tripos. He will be very welcome here when he chooses to come

1. J.N. Papers, N M M.L

2. Nehru was in London from 3 to 7 December 1946

3. *The Making of the Indian Princes* by Edward Thompson, the first two parts were published in 1943

I am afraid we are tied up completely with our various problems. The rest of this year and possibly next year will bring little relief.

With all good wishes,

Yours,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 10. To B.G. Davis<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
15 April 1947

Dear Mr. Davis,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your letter of March 21st. You have written generously about me;<sup>3</sup> but what I am more interested in is your reactions<sup>4</sup> to India as it is today. I myself have no doubt about the future of India in spite of the present troubles that we are having.

I shall be glad to read your article on your visit to India when it appears

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N M M.L.

2 B G Davis of Ziff-Davis Publishing Company, Chicago, Illinois, U S A , had earlier visited India and had an interview with Nehru.

3 "The suppressed dynamism of your own personality seems to epitomize the spirit that I found throughout India among its political and industrial leaders "

4 " I was literally overwhelmed at the essential and fundamental potential that exists in your fabulous country . India is destined to become one of the three great powers of the world. "

## 11. Message to Bengal<sup>1</sup>

The present is a testing time and all of us particularly those from Bengal should face these troubles with courage and determination

1. Speech at Kali Bari, New Delhi, 15 April 1947. From *The Hindustan Times*, 16 April 1947.

I have come to you not as a Member or Vice-President of the Interim Government but as one of your old comrades

Unless we come into contact with the common people, we cannot know about their difficulties nor can they know about our limitations I know difficult problems are facing the people of the country, particularly the problems of Bengal, which are going to affect our national life and culture very deeply. Bengal which played an important part in the advancement of the country is faced with serious troubles There is no need to get worried over these They have to be faced with courage and determination

Looked at from a broader perspective, many of our existing difficulties are of a minor character. There are much bigger events taking place in our country which should claim our attention. If we look at them in an objective manner, we will find that our country is marching forward An outsider, if he saw what was happening in our country, was bound to come to the conclusion that India was fast progressing on the road to greatness Those of us who are living in the country are not able to fully appreciate this and get worried over minor problems.

The coming year is bound to be full of troubles. We have to prepare ourselves to face them and sacrifice our all for the achievement of our objective Much still remains to be done. We may have to change our tactics and should be prepared to meet all eventualities. Though important changes are likely to occur during the coming year, our task will not be over.

## 12. The Guardians of India's Future<sup>1</sup>

March proudly forward, defiant and with heads raised high.

The traditional description of women as *abala* will not hold good. It is degrading to be described as weak Life has no place for the weak. The women of India should, therefore, cast away their weakness and rise in full stature.

As mothers, women are guardians of India's future generations. India can build a body of strong, capable and noble citizens only if Indian mothers instil these qualities in their children

<sup>1</sup> Message to the Central India Nationalist Women's Conference held in Gwalior on 19 April 1947 *The Hindustan Times*, 20 April 1947

### 13. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit<sup>1</sup>

Mussoorie  
22 May 1947

Nan Dear,

Evidently the telephone arrangements between Mussoorie and Naini Tal are not good Anyhow I managed to convey to you that we have moved from "Cosy Nook" to "Kamala Castle" And now we are living in this ornate and rather pompous place. It is far more comfortable, of course, but I fear I do not admire Mr Padampat Singhania's<sup>2</sup> taste.

I am going down from here on Sunday I propose to visit St Dunstan's<sup>3</sup> and the Indian Military Academy Sunday is not a good day, but there is no help for it. Indu is accompanying me down and will go to Delhi with me for a day or two as she wants some clothes.

From your account as well as others I should very much like Sir Clutha Mackenzie's<sup>4</sup> work for blind soldiers to be continued Certainly I shall try to put in a word in favour of this.

I expect to reach Delhi by about 10 on Monday morning After that there will be another terrific round of meetings and conferences What exactly will emerge out of it, I do not quite know. I suppose we shall have to swallow many a bitter pill But we might even swallow this if we can put an end to the present impasse The situation has become intolerable and all the evident goodwill of Mountbatten does not make it more bearable What is happening in the Punjab, in Lahore specially now, is undoubtedly partly caused and partly continued by the attitude of local British authority Nobody seems to be responsible and things drift from bad to worse

I am not going to Hardwar as it takes too much time and I do not suppose I could do much good But I feel that something must be done quickly in Dehra Dun This is more necessary from the point of view of the residents of Dehra Dun than of the refugees of the Punjab These refugees in Dehra Dun and Mussoorie are, as you know, mostly rich people and they are upsetting life in these places by their deals in money Presently you will have a new problem round about here—U P

1 J N. Collection

2 (1905-1979), a leading industrialist of Kanpur, member of Parliament, 1947-52 and of many government and semi-government bodies

3 The reference is to an organisation of St Dunstan's in Dehra Dun which looked after the soldiers blinded in the Second World War

4 Clutha (Nantes) Mackenzie (1895-1966), blinded in action 1915, St Dunstan's representative in India, 1939-40 and 1942-48

versus Punjabi feeling To some extent one cannot help this, but I think much can be done if an old army prison or civilian detenus camp is provided for the Punjab refugees I spoke to Pantji and Rafi about it when they were here Pantji then mentioned that one of these camps was already reserved for other work. About the other camp he said that the permission of the Defence Department would be necessary. I am sure this permission will be available if Pantji writes for it I shall do my best in the matter. I think something should be done quickly. I am writing to Pantji in the matter also, but I would like you to speak to him.

I have been considerably put out also by the Asaf Ali picture business I have written to him about it There is far too much Hollywood about the Embassy and its work

We are taking steps about Moscow and I hope that something will be announced early next month.

As I told you, Ratan is leaving for America on the 26th morning. Probably someone else will be leaving on our behalf by the end of this month. So if you wish anything sent, I could hand it over to him You can certainly ask Asaf Ali to help in getting passages for Tara and Rita.

With love from

Jawahar

#### 14. To I. Olsvanger<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
22 May 1947

Dear Dr Olsvanger,

Thank you for your letter dated 19th April which I received some time ago. I enclose a copy of a letter<sup>2</sup> I am sending to Mr. Bentov.<sup>3</sup> I received your previous letter also I was not hurt by it, of course, but I felt sad We are all struggling through very difficult times and sometimes the light is dim Nevertheless we try to follow that light to the best of our ability.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 J.N Collection

2 See the succeeding item

3 (b. 1900); Israeli journalist and politician, Minister of Labour and Reconstruction, 1948-49 and of Development, 1955-61; author of several books including *The Case for Bi-National Palestine* and *Israel's Economy at the Crossroads*

15. To M. Bentov<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
22 May 1947

My dear Mr Bentov,

I am very sorry for the great delay in acknowledging your letter of the 27th February. The copies of other letters that you sent me with this letter were of interest to me I had not previously received or seen these letters

In view of the fact that the Workers Library is a non-profit-making educational concern, I do not wish to charge any royalty on the Hebrew translations of my books I am content that the books should reach the Hebrew reading public in Palestine and that any profit on them should be utilised for the benefit of the workers

I must thank you for the book *Deep Furrows* that you sent me long ago. I have been receiving also from time to time other pamphlets and periodicals published in Palestine and I have been trying to keep myself abreast, as far as I can, with the situation there. I realise the extreme complexity of that situation and I earnestly trust that some solution by way of compromise will be found Any solution which follows large-scale coercion and violence is no solution at all

As you know, we are having plenty of troubles of our own in India and it has been difficult to hold on to the ideals we have cherished for so long. Yet we have to hold on to those ideals, or else we have no anchorage. I have no doubt that we shall win through in the end.

I am afraid it is not at all possible for me to write a special introduction for the Hebrew edition either of my *Autobiography* or *The Discovery of India*.<sup>2</sup> I am overwhelmed with work at the present moment and I cannot turn my mind to writing.

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 J N Collection

2 In his letter of 27 February 1947 Bentov had asked Nehru to write introductions for the Hebrew editions of *Autobiography* and *The Discovery of India*

16. To Claire Boothe Luce<sup>1</sup>

Mussoorie

24 May 1947

Dear Claire Luce,

A dear friend of mine, Dr. Bidhan C. Roy, is going to the United States and I am giving this note of introduction for you to him. He is one of our most eminent physicians and has distinguished himself in many other fields also notably in education. He has been Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University. I hope he will have the opportunity of meeting you during his stay in the States.

In the course of the last year and a half I had sent you two letters<sup>2</sup>. I am not sure if they have reached you. Sometimes mutual friends from America bring me news of you which is very welcome.

I am afraid we are having a tough time here in India. But I suppose I must not complain because all the world is passing through a very difficult period of transition. Anyhow I am confident that we shall pull through in India and make good.

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 J N Collection

2 One letter dated 4 May 1946 is printed in *Selected Works*, Vol 15, pp 597-599. The other is not available

17. To Frances Gunther<sup>1</sup>

Mussoorie

24 May 1947

My dear Frances,

It is ages since I have written to you or you have written to me. You have even given up sending me batches of postcards and press cuttings. I suppose you think that I am frightfully busy. Well, of course, I am, and what is worse than being busy, continually worried. Yet I manage to survive well enough and keep pretty fit in spite of everything. We live in India, as elsewhere, in a continual state of crisis. That crisis seems to be moving to a climax now. For that one has to be thankful, for I am tired of these continuing crises.

1 J N Collection

It is always a delight to hear from you and have news of you. What have you been doing during the past year or so? Have you been adding to your vast stores of knowledge and learning? Somehow I begin to feel that this business of adding to one's learning and knowledge, helpful as it is, does not always make one much wiser. And certainly human beings and human events are so odd that one has to consider each situation afresh.

My immediate object in writing to you is to give a note of introduction to an old and dear friend of mine, Dr. Bidhan C Roy, of Calcutta. I do not know if you met him when you were in India. He is one of our foremost physicians and has distinguished himself in many other fields notably the educational. He was Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University. I hope you will meet him and make him feel at home in the States where he is going for the first time.

Yours ever,  
Jawaharlal

## 18. To Shantilal Kothari<sup>1</sup>

Mussoorie  
May 24, 1947

Dear Friend,

You sent me last month a letter enclosing your vacation programme for students.<sup>2</sup> In this programme I do not see the value of students agitating against the present education system. Of course this system is not good and must be reformed. There are numerous committees considering this problem. Students may be enthusiastic but are hardly competent with their present knowledge to lay down rules for an education system. There are, in fact, several very good reports of committees regarding reform of education.

The other items in your programme appear to be good. The main thing is to do something and not to talk about it too much.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

<sup>1</sup> J N Collection.

<sup>2</sup> Shantilal Kothari, General Secretary, Bombay Provincial Students Congress, had sent a vacation programme for students and asked for Nehru's advice and support.

**19. To Sukeshni Pathak<sup>1</sup>**

Mussoorie  
24 May 1947

Dear Friend,

You wrote to me a letter last month in which you complained bitterly about what happened to students in Lahore on the 25th April<sup>2</sup>. Your complaint was justified<sup>3</sup>. Since then much worse has happened in Lahore and in other parts of the country. I hope you realise that this is something much deeper than a student problem and it cannot be dealt with by slogans and public meetings. You and your fellow students should try to understand the difficulties which India is facing today on the eve of her freedom. You must not be disheartened by what is happening and at the same time you must not treat it lightly and get lost in your own particular problems.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal

1 J N Collection

2 In Lahore on 25 April one student was killed and another wounded seriously as a result of police firing on student demonstrators who wanted postponement of examinations

3. In her letter of 27 April 1947, Sukeshni Pathak, a student of Lahore, had complained about the behaviour of the police who would not let the injured student go to hospital. This resulted in his death

**20. On the Threshold of Fulfilment<sup>1</sup>**

Difficult times are ahead, but you must face the situation bravely. While India is on the threshold of freedom, while our goal is within our reach, saboteurs are active. Forces of evil and good are at war but I believe India will come successfully out of this internal strife. The world looks for friendship with India which is going to be a mighty nation. Our countrymen are indulging in arson and destruction. The situation is deplorable. Out of this conflagration we will come out triumphant

1. Speech at a reception given to Nehru and Patel by the citizens of Mussoorie on 25 May 1947. *The Hindu*, 27 May 1947.

We are not ignorant of the happenings in certain parts of India. We have our limitations and in spite of that we have to carry the burden of administration. But the time is not far when we shall have real power, when our countrymen will have no worry, when their needs will be fulfilled. Be confident, the day of national rejoicing is not very far. We are determined to control the present situation and raise the status of our country.

## GLOSSARY

Abala	a weak woman
Chupchap	quietly
Kharif	winter harvest
Murdabad	'death to'
Rabi	spring harvest
Vaisakhi Purnima	full moon day in the second month of the Hindu lunar calendar (March-April)

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